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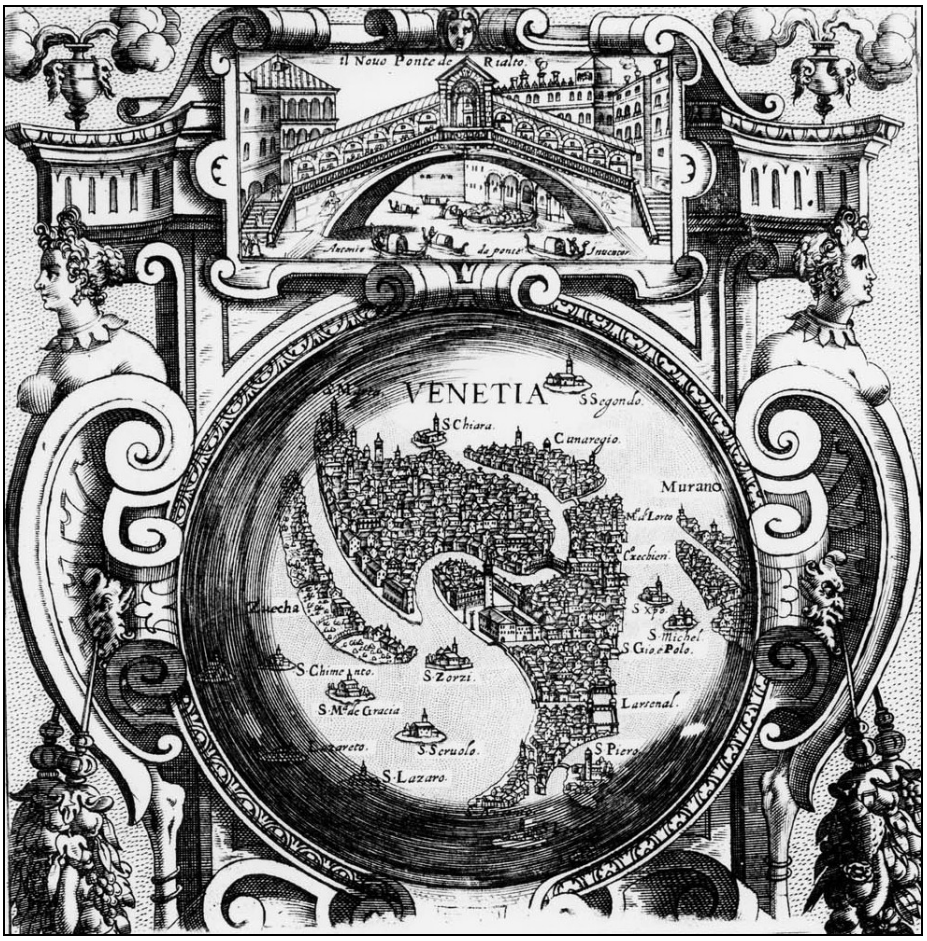
TRADING PLACES:
THE NETHERLANDISH MERCHANT COMMUNITY IN VENICE, 1590-1650



Maartje van Gelder

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The jacket shows a detail from the frontispiece to Giacomo Franco, *Habiti d'huomeni e donne venetiane* (Venice 1610)

TRADING PLACES:
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List of abbreviations

AC	Avogaria di Comun
APV	Archivio del Patriarcato di Venezia
ASL	Archivio di Stato di Livorno
ASV	Archivio di Stato di Venezia
CSPV	*Calendar of state papers and manuscripts, relating to English affairs existing in the archives and collections of Venice, and in other libraries of Northern Italy*
CD	Consiglio dei Dieci
Correr	Biblioteca Civica del Museo Correr
CRD	Collegio, Risposte di dentro
DLH	Directie van de Levantse Handel
GAA	Gemeentearchief Amsterdam
GF	Giudici del Forestier
GP	Giudici di Petizion
Marciana	Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana
NA	Notarile, Atti
NA The Hague	Nationaal Archief The Hague
NotArch	Notarieel Archief Amsterdam
NT	Notarile, Testamenti
PB	Provveditori alle Biave
RGP	Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën
SAA	Stadsarchief Antwerpen
SBG	Senato, Banco Giro
SDB	Senato, Deliberazioni, Biave
SM	Senato Mar
ST	Senato Terra
UBA	Universiteitsbibliotheek Amsterdam
VSM	Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia

b.	busta
c.	carta
f.	filza
fasc.	fascicolo
fol.	folio
m.v.	more veneto
n.p.	not paginated
r.	registro

Note on dates, names, and currency

* The Venetian calendar began the year on 1 March. Dates in the text have been converted to the Roman calendar, but dates in the notes have been left in the Venetian style to facilitate locating the documents in the Venetian archives. To avoid confusion, any dates between 1 January and 1 March in the Venetian style are followed by the abbreviation m.v., or *more veneto*. Venetian notaries usually adhered to the Roman calendar.

* The names of the Netherlanders in Venice were spelled in many different ways: first names were usually translated to Italian ('Jan' becoming 'Giovanni') or to the Venetian dialect ('Jan' becoming 'Zuane'). Last names were sometimes translated, Italianized, or adapted beyond recognition. For instance, the Antwerp merchant Nicolaas Peeters was known in Venice as Nicolò Perez. In general I have chosen to give the Italian version of the first name and the variant of the last name most commonly used in Venetian documents.

* 1 Venetian ducat of account = circa 2 guilders

Introduction

A reversal of fortunes

One late afternoon in October 1649, at the end of his three-week stay in Venice, Arnout Hellemans Hooft finally found the marble funeral monument of his great-uncles Guglielmo and Antonio Helman in the church of Santa Maria Formosa. The Netherlandish[1] merchants Guglielmo and Antonio, originally from Antwerp, had been operating the Helman family firm in Venice. Like many wealthy native Venetians, the great-uncles of Hellemans Hooft had made provisions during their lifetimes for the construction of a conspicuous memorial which, after their deaths, would express their identity and the identity of their family; the resulting imposing monument enveloped an entire side entrance of Santa Maria Formosa (Ill. 0.1). Hellemans Hooft diligently copied their epitaphs into his travel journal, where they stand out among the many impersonal inscriptions on public monuments he collected during his Grand Tour.[2]

Antonio Helman had died in 1582, and the last part of the inscription in his remembrance succinctly recalls his status as an immigrant: "Grown up among my compatriots, the Netherlanders. Dying in this city of Venice, I lie buried in this grave". His brother Guglielmo's epitaph is slightly more melancholic, but also juxtaposes his Netherlandish origin to his residence in Venice: "I was Gulielmus Helmanus: Flanders

[1] The words 'Netherlands' and 'Low Countries' in this thesis refer to the territory of the seventeen provinces under Habsburg rule, roughly corresponding to the current kingdoms of Belgium, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands. During the revolt against Habsburg Spain (1568-1648) the provinces became separated, with the seven northern provinces developing into a new state, the Republic of the United Provinces or Dutch Republic. The ten southern provinces remained under Habsburg dominion and are known as the Southern or Spanish Netherlands. The term 'Netherlandish' will be used to refer to persons originally from the Low Countries before they were divided during the Dutch Revolt. In doing so, I employ the same umbrella term as in early modern Italy, where in general anyone from the Low Countries was a *fiammingo*, regardless of whether they came from the province of Flanders or not. This practice originated in the Middle Ages, when contacts between Italy and the Low Countries centred on Flanders, De Groof, "Natie en nationaliteit", 90 and Van Kessel, *Van Fiandra naar Olanda*. For a more detailed discussion of the Netherlandish merchants' provenance, see below, Chapter 4, 96-99. On the Helman family in Venice, see Brulez, "Venetiaanse handelsbetrekkingen"; Brulez, "De diaspora", 303-305.

[2] Until this accidental discovery, Hellemans Hooft had been searching fruitlessly for the monument in other churches: "'S naemiddaghs vond ik de grafschriften van de ooms bij geval, daer ik langh nae gesocht had in alle kerken, in de kerk van Santa Maria Formosa", Hellemans Hooft, *Een naekt beeldt*, 87. The manuscript of the travel journal can be found in UBA, Collectie Handschriften V J 40.

mourns me; the Adriatic Sea pines for me; the poor call on me".[3] They were not the only members of their family to have settled abroad. One brother of Guglielmo and Antonio continued in Antwerp, while the others represented the family firm's interests in Hamburg, Paris, Seville, and Constantinople.[4] After the death of Guglielmo in 1593, his younger brother Carlo left the Constantinople branch and took over in Venice.[5]

The scattering of relatives across different trading centres was not unique to the Helman family. Early modern trade required a high degree of mobility, and merchants often travelled to foreign cities or sent out representatives.[6] As Europe's economic centre of gravity gradually moved north during the first half of the sixteenth century, Antwerp began to take up a pivotal role in international commerce and its traders became more active abroad. This international orientation was reinforced when, in the second half of the century, the uncertainties arising from the revolt against Spain forced many Netherlandish traders from the southern provinces to escape to places offering greater safety, religious freedom, and economic prosperity. The large-scale migration movement or 'Antwerp diaspora' dispersed merchants and artisans across the trading centres of early modern Europe.[7]

Among the many thousands who fled from their homeland in these decades was Arnout Helman, the only one of the brothers who had converted to Protestantism and who settled in Hamburg. His daughter Leonora later married the Dutch poet and bailiff Pieter Cornelisz Hooft, and it was their son Arnout who found the funeral monument in

[3] The complete epitaph for Antonio reads: "Spes ego fallaces cognovi/ Antonius esse/ Exiguo vitae tempore/ factus inops,/ inter concives Belgas exort,/ in urbe/ hac Veneta moriens,/ contegor hoc tumulo". The one dedicated to Guglielmo reads: "Vixi aliis dum vita fuit./ Post funera tandem/ non perii, at gelido/ in marmore vivo mihi;/ Helmanus Gulielmus eram/ me Flandria luget;/ Hadria suspirat;/ pauperiesque vocat". Arnout Hellemans Hooft made a few errors in his transcription, cf. UBA, Collectie Handschriften V J 40, fol.54r. For the last wills of Antonio and Guglielmo, see Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.30 and 75. For the concession of the burial space in Santa Maria Formosa to the Helman family, ASV, NA, b.5663, c.531r-533v, 21 October 1602.

[4] The Ottomans themselves called the city either Kostantiniye or alternatively Istanbul, which became the official name only after 1932, Mantran, *La vie quotidienne*, 298. While 'Istanbul' is preferred by Ottomanists, I have chosen to adhere to the terminology used by most historians working on early modern Venice, referring to the Ottoman capital as 'Constantinople'.

[5] Carlo died in 1605 while on a business trip to Spain, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.1790, and was never buried in Venice.

[6] Lesger, *The rise of the Amsterdam market*, 57-58.

[7] The seminal article on this subject is Brulez, "De diaspora". Many migrants fled from Antwerp - which from 1585 was brought back under Spanish rule - and settled in the Northern Netherlands.

1649.[8] Family ties proved resilient in a time of religious and political turmoil, and the central inscription on the memorial in Santa Maria Formosa not only extols the Helmans' wealth, piety, and charity, but also proclaims the family's strong cohesion despite their dispersal: the Helmans "were so united, that, even though they traded in all the realms of the world, they formed a single house (…), overtaken by an early death, [Guglielmo and Antonio] lie locked up in this grave, and the others elsewhere".[9] Their international scope served the Helmans well in their trade in jewellery and precious stones, which they combined with trade in commodities such as sugar, textiles, and wool.[10]

Netherlandish merchants like the Helman brothers had become a prominent presence in Venice in the last decade of the sixteenth century. This achievement was illustrated in 1596, when the Venetian Senate, consulting the most important merchants on the foundation of a new state bank, also invited the collective of Netherlandish traders to give their opinion. Twenty-four merchants, including Carlo Helman, signed their names to the advice offered by the *nazione fiamminga*, the Netherlandish trading nation.[11] Yet whereas the buildings of the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* and the *Fondaco dei Turchi* on the Canal Grande still testify to the activities of the German and Ottoman merchants, the Helman funeral monument is the most tangible expression of the Netherlanders' presence in Venice.

This study will examine why traders from the Low Countries settled in Venice and succeeded in becoming such a strong commercial force in a city accustomed to protecting its own trade. It will do so by studying the activities of the individual Netherlandish immigrant traders as well as their communal relations. Who were these merchants and how did they conduct their commerce? Why did they not live and trade in a *fondaco*, an

[8] Hellemans Hooft, *Een naekt beeldt*, 12. For P.C. Hooft's own visits to Venice fifty years earlier, Hooft, *Reis-heuchenis*, 142-148, 212-213.

[9] The central inscription reads: "Gulielmus, et Antonius, cum Arnoldo, Pet: Franc: Io Bapt./ et Carolo fratrib, ex Petro Hellemans Antverpiae/ progeniti, catholicae relig: cultores, clari divitiis,/ pietate, charitate, et liberalitate clariores, in pauperes/ magna divitiar, parte erogata. Tanta inter se fuere/ animor, concordia, ut, licet in omnibus mundi regnis/ negociarentur, una tamen sibi domus ubiq esset; unde regibus, et principibus cunctis gratiss: et ser: venet: reip:/ decreto inter cives adscripti, immatura morte/ praeventi hoc tumulo, et caeteri alibi, claudentur".

[10] See Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, for example, nos.138; 968; 972; 973; 1048; 1071.

[11] ASV, ST, f.141. In 1587, the Banco della Piazza di Rialto was founded as a result of the failure of the last private bank in 1584. In 1596, the Senate discussed whether to establish a second state bank, the Banco di Giro, which was eventually founded in 1619, Tucci, "Il Banco della Piazza di Rialto", 231-250.

institution used by the Venetians to control the presence and activities of other groups of immigrant merchants? What was the character of the *nazione fiamminga*? And how did the specific nature of the Netherlanders' commercial activities and their mutual relations shape their interaction with Venetian society?

The arrival of the Netherlandish merchants needs to be understood as a feature of the profound changes occurring in the early modern European economy, changes which severely affected Venice. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Venetians had dominated the lucrative trade in pepper and other oriental products to the rest of Europe. Their galleys transported these commodities from the Levant to Lisbon, London, Bruges, and Antwerp, while the South German towns were furnished by the Alpine trade routes.[12] The Venetian Republic was devoted to protecting and supporting international trade, which remained the prerogative of the Venetian elite.[13] Cracks had begun to appear in the Republic's supremacy when, at the end of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese discovered a direct ocean route to Asia and started to carry pepper and spices around the Cape of Good Hope to Europe. Venice, however, quickly recovered from this blow, retaining a substantial part of the spice trade during much of the sixteenth century.[14] Yet by the start of the seventeenth century Venice had lost its leadership role in the Asian trade, and its nobility had abandoned maritime commerce for landownership. The intensive exploitation of the oceanic trade routes by the English East India Company and the Dutch Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) proved to be too much competition: within a few years after the foundation of the VOC in 1602, pepper was being shipped from Amsterdam to the Venetian Republic, evidence of the irreversible transformation of international trading routes to the advantage of the Atlantic world.[15]

As the centre of the European economy swung to the shores of the North, southern Europe faced a long period of decline, of which Venice is often cited as the

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[12] Van der Wee, "Structural changes in European long-distance trade", 20-27; Lane, *Venice*, 67-85, 200-201, 287-288.

[13] The typical mercantile career of a fifteenth-century Venetian patrician is described in Lane, *Andrea Barbarigo*.

[14] Lane, "The Mediterranean spice trade"; Lane, "Venetian shipping", 228-239. Both articles were reprinted in Pullan (ed.), *Crisis and change*. See also Luzzato, "La decadenza".

[15] The best account of Venetian international trade in the seventeenth century is still Sella, *Commerci e industrie*, esp. 26ff for the loss of the spice trade. Also Sella, "Crisis and transformation", 96-97, which was published earlier as "Il declino". For the importation of pepper into Venice from Amsterdam, see below, Chapter 3, 64, 77.

prime example.[16] At the same time the northerners also became more involved in Mediterranean trade and shipping. In the famous words of Fernand Braudel, their vessels "swarmed into the Mediterranean like so many heavy insects crashing against the window panes".[17] With this rather violent metaphor Braudel heralded a new phase at the end of his study of the Mediterranean in the age of Philip II.[18] In Braudel's opinion, the invasion of English and, especially, Netherlandish ships in the final decade of the sixteenth century represented the definite take-over of Mediterranean maritime, commercial, and financial life by the northern European powers.[19] Studying the settlement of Netherlandish merchants during this period of transition therefore also throws light on the impact of these changes on both Venetian trade and Venetian society.

Contemporary Venetian authorities saw the increasing importance of Netherlandish traders on the Venetian marketplace as a distinctive feature of their times and struggled to find a response to these new arrivals. As its own trade and shipping fell prey to a severe depression, the city-state became increasingly dependent on foreign transport services and foreign suppliers, which put its traditional protectionist policies under pressure.[20] By 1602, the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*, the Venetian Board of Trade, lamented that foreigners and outsiders from distant countries had become masters of all the shipping.[21] Five years later they reported that among all the foreign merchants in

[16] Cipolla, "The economic decline", 134-135 and Musgrave, *The early modern European economy*, 112-137. On the shift of the economic centre of gravity in the seventeenth century towards northwestern Europe, De Vries, *The economy of Europe*, 25-29; Davis, *Rise of the Atlantic economies*, passim.

[17] Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. I, 634. For Braudel, the sixteenth-century Mediterranean was a world-economy, a "whole area stimulated by its trading activities", with Venice as dominant city at its centre. After brief stages in which Antwerp and Genoa succeeded Venice as world capitals, Amsterdam became the leading city, thereby asserting once and for all the dominance of the North over the Mediterranean, Braudel, *The perspective of the world*, 22-38, 116-138, 175-276.

[18] Ibidem, 175-176; Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. I, 626-640.

[19] Greene modified Braudel's idea of a complete northern take-over, arguing that although the Netherlanders and English did seize control over long-distance maritime commerce between the Mediterranean and northern Europe, others such as the Greeks and Ottomans continued to take part in the lucrative intra-Mediterranean carrying trade, Greene, "Beyond the northern invasion", esp. 46-52.

[20] The size of Venice's merchant marine roughly halved between 1560 and 1600. Foreign ships, which were considered to be faster and safer in a sea that was increasingly infested with pirates, were handling a growing amount of seaborne trade to and from Venice, Sella, "Crisis and transformation", 92; Lane, "Venetian shipping", 236. On piracy and the decline of Venetian shipping, see Tenenti, *Piracy*; Tenenti, *Naufrages*.

[21] This report of the *Cinque Savi* is included in ASV, SM, r.141, 15 July 1602.

Venice, the Netherlanders now dominated maritime trade,[22] while in the early 1620s the Republic's historian and future doge Nicolò Contarini was particularly concerned with the recent arrival of traders and ships from the Low Countries. He complained that the Republic was too lenient with these foreigners, showering them with favours in the hope of attracting their trade without taking into account the long-term negative effects on Venice's own commerce.[23]

The natural starting point of analysis for this thesis is formed by the last decade of the sixteenth century. While Amsterdam developed into a leading trade centre, Venice was harshly confronted with its dependence on the Netherlanders during the severe famines of the early 1590s. Roughly fifty years after the first large-scale presence of northern merchant vessels in the Mediterranean, the war of the northern provinces of the Low Countries against Spain came to an end. The lifting of Spanish embargoes and the cessation of Dutch-Spanish hostilities in the New World signified a new phase for Amsterdam commerce and navigation.[24] For Venice, on the other hand, the 1640s brought a new conflict with the Ottoman Empire over the island of Crete. The drawn-out war, which lasted from 1645 until 1669, meant the end of Venice's colonial empire, once the foundation of its commercial hegemony, while the financial burden forced the state to open up the privileged patrician class to newcomers. In the period between 1590 and 1650, two generations of Netherlandish immigrant merchants gained a foothold in a city-state facing a series of radical changes which affected both its commerce and social order.

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[22] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.141, 16 January 1606 (m.v.), c.192r-192v: "La nation fiamenga al presente fa grossissimi facenda et si puo dir, che ella piu di tutte le altre facci fiorir il negotio in questa città".

[23] Contarini discusses the arrival of the northerners and the negative effects on Venice in book VI of his unpublished *Historie venetiane*, excerpts of which are given in Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini*. For this particular quotation, 363, where he writes that the Netherlanders "venivano a Venetia; et imparata la navigatione del Golfo tanto bene quanto alcun natio del paese, erano in ogni luogo e particolarmente a Venetia, favoriti, perché non prevedendosi dove fusse per arrivare questa nuova navigatione, che pur all'hora apportava qualche benefficio alla città, non solo erano in generale (...) favoriti, ma di più ancora con donativi dal publico accarezzati, accioché sollecitamente frequentassero il negotio".

[24] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 610-611.

The decline of Venice and the rise of Amsterdam

The arrival of Netherlandish merchants in Venice has attracted attention from historians, but until now with little serious result. During a conference on Venice's economic decline in 1957, the economic historian Gino Luzzatto regretted the absence of contributions discussing the effect of Netherlandish trade and traders on Venetian decadence.[1] Years later the Helman brothers were cited by Ugo Tucci, in his essay on the detachment of the Venetian nobility from trade, as an example of foreign merchants bringing "a new spirit to the Venetian business world", at the expense of the old-fashioned Venetian traders who had become "slaves to routine".[2] A two-volume source edition compiled by the Belgian historians Wilfrid Brulez and Greta Devos, containing excerpts of over 4,000 Venetian notarial records and covering the period 1568-1621, gave an indication of the Netherlanders' activities at the Rialto market.[3] However, not even the wealth of information collected by Brulez and Devos resulted in a study on the Netherlandish presence in Venice.

This can be at least partly explained by the fact that the study of Venice's waning role in international trade, in the words of James Grubb, has been "largely moribund since the early 1970s".[4] The decline of international trade had been a long-debated subject in Venetian historiography during the previous decades, and one of the main issues discussed was the exact chronology of Venice's commercial downfall.[5] When general agreement was reached that the passage from maritime commerce to agriculture and industry was both a cause and symptom of the decline, there seemed little point in

[1] Luzzatto, "Introduzione", 5. In the collection of essays based on the conference proceedings, the general northern European perspective is discussed in Beutin, "La décadence économique", while the English, French, and German view was given in Davis, "Influences"; Braudel et al., "Le déclin de Venise"; and Kellenbenz, "Le déclin", respectively.

[2] Tucci, "The psychology of the Venetian merchant", 357. For a study taking a comparative approach to seventeenth-century Venetian and Amsterdam elite, including their economic activities: Burke, *Venice and Amsterdam*, which, however, does not discuss relations between both cities.

[3] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I; Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II.

[4] Grubb, "When myths lose power", 62-63.

[5] The most important contributions are the essays collected in Pullan (ed.), *Crisis and change*; the essays in *Aspetti e cause*; Sella, *Commerci e industrie*; Braudel, "La vita economica"; Luzzato, "La decadenza". Discussions of existing historiography can be found in Grubb, "When myths lose power", 60-64, and in Quazza, *La decadenza italiana*, 35-51, which also places the Venetian case in an European context.

further exploration.[6] In 1976, revising the traditional account of complete decay, Richard Rapp argued that Venice's economic decline was merely relative, compared to the growth of Amsterdam and London, while the city's industrial activity guaranteed that both population and income remained stable throughout the seventeenth century.[7] Dramatic accounts of the total collapse of Venetian commerce were replaced by the idea that the decline was partly compensated by the increased importance of regional trade and industry. As a result, historiographical attention has shifted away from maritime international commerce and towards the Terraferma industries.[8] Because the changes in European commerce are generally accepted and a broad consensus has been reached on the timing and causes of Venetian decline, questions relating to the impact of these transformations on Venetian society no longer seemed to hold any interest.[9]

Historians working on Netherlandish trade have mostly focused on the final decade of the sixteenth century, when Netherlandish vessels suddenly arrived in large numbers in Mediterranean waters.[10] At the beginning of the twentieth century, Hermann Wätjen gave a first account of Dutch trade and shipping in the Mediterranean, based on the records of the States General and the archives of the Board of Levant Trade (*Directie van den Levantschen Handel*).[11] With regard to Venice, he pointed out the tension

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[6] Grubb, "When myths lose power", 62-63.

[7] Rapp, *Industry and economic decline*; see also his article "The unmaking". Cf. Luzzatto, "Le vicende del porto di Venezia", 17-20. Rapp's statistical methods were sharply criticized by Marino, "La crisi".

[8] Good examples are the essays in Lanaro (ed.), *At the centre of the Old World*; Vianello, *Seta fine*; Demo, *L'anima della città*. A useful study analyzing the overall changes in early modern Venetian economy is Pezzolo, *Il fisco*, which combines two earlier contributions to the *Storia di Venezia* series.

[9] In the most recent volume of essays on Venetian history, economic history is conspicuously absent, see Martin and Romano (eds.), *Venice reconsidered*. An exception to this trend form the many works dedicated to the Jewish mercantile presence in Venice, see, for example, Ravid, "An introduction to the charters"; Arbel, *Trading nations*. Nonetheless, the recent studies by Fusaro and Ruspio on the English and Portuguese traders in early modern Venice, respectively, are proof of the growing attention paid to immigrant traders. Both shall be discussed below. Late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century native Venetian traders have been given even less attention. However, for a recent work on the Venetian community in Constantinople in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*.

[10] For descriptions of trade relations before the 1590s, Brulez, *De firma Della Faille*; Brulez, "L'exportation des Pays-Bas", and the concise survey given in Stabel, "Venice and the Low Countries". The first Netherlandish contribution referring to those early maritime trade contacts is De Jonge, *Nederland en Venetië*, 281-314. De Jonge exclusively used Dutch sources, mostly diplomatic dispatches and resolutions of the States General. For studies on the diplomatic relations between the Dutch Republic and Venice, the best works are still Blok, *Relazioni veneziane* and Geyl, *Christofforo Suriano*.

[11] The *Directie,* unlike the English Levant Company and the VOC, was not a trading company, but a lobbying group promoting the interests of those doing business in the Mediterranean. It was founded in 1625, on the instigation of Cornelis Haga, the Dutch ambassador in Constantinople, and remained operative for two centuries, Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 173-183; Bijl, *De Nederlandse*

between Venetian protectionism and Dutch commercial activities after 1590.[12] In the years following Wätjen's work, trade with the Mediterranean would never receive as much historiographical attention as Baltic commerce, which was considered to be the foundation of Dutch trade, or the spectacular exploits of the VOC in the East. When historians did address this subject, they attempted to explain the characteristics of the *Straatvaart* - Netherlandish maritime commerce (*vaart*) beyond the Strait (*Straat*) of Gibraltar - and how it first became an integral part of Dutch trade.[13] Based on an analysis of freighting contracts found in the Amsterdam notarial archives, Simon Hart gave a detailed description of the organization of Amsterdam shipping and trade with Italy between 1590 and 1620.[14] Paul van Royen used the same source to determine the number of Northern Netherlandish vessels sailing to the Mediterranean, arriving at an indicative figure of nearly four hundred ships leaving from Amsterdam in the first fifteen years.[15]

Whereas these contributions were exclusively based on Dutch sources and looked at the *Straatvaart* solely from a northern European point of view, Braudel put the *Straatvaart* in a Mediterranean perspective. As mentioned above, to Braudel the arrival of the Netherlanders marked the definitive end of the Mediterranean's role as the linchpin in intercontinental trade. He saw this development as a manifestation of the 'secular trend', the cycle determined by the levels of population, food-supplies, and prices. At the end of the sixteenth century, the growing population of Italy placed too much strain on local agricultural output. The northerners, with their leading role in the Baltic grain trade,

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convooidienst, 74-76; Van Brakel, *De Hollandsche handelsompagnieën*. For a comparison between the *Directie* and the Levant Company, see Nanninga, *De Nederlandsche koopman*, 116-120. A year after *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, a collection of sources concerning Dutch-Mediterranean trade was published, Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van den Levantschen handel*, 2 vols., covering the period 1590 until 1660. These volumes were part of the Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën series and in later years, three other editions appeared which covered trade with the Mediterranean until 1826.

[12] Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, for Venice esp. 32-33, 92-99, 119-121.

[13] Kernkamp, "Het begin"; Kernkamp, "Scheepvaart- en handelsbetrekkingen", which was republished in 1964 in Van Riel and Brugmans (eds.), *Economisch-historische herdrukken*; Kernkamp and Klaassen-Meijer, "De rekeningen". See also Sneller, "Het begin"; Sneller, "De drie cargasoenen", and Chapter 4 in Van Dillen, *Van rijkdom en regenten*, which is a synthesis of social-economic development of the Dutch Golden Age.

[14] Hart, "De Italië-vaart", which was republished that same year as "Die Amsterdamer Italienfahrt".

[15] Based on Amsterdam freight contracts, Van Royen shows that the new trade route quickly became integrated into the Dutch trade network, with ships making longer voyages in the Mediterranean as well as combining more destinations in a single trip, Van Royen, "The first phase", 73-86. See also his "Naar wijder horizon" and "The maritime relations".

could meet the demand for cereals, and thus their dominance in bulk trade formed the basis for their conquest of the Mediterranean market.[16]

In his synthesis of the rise and fall of Dutch trade in the early modern period, Jonathan Israel attacks the Braudelian view that economic history is determined by the secular trend, offering an alternative interpretation in which political and military events are vital determinants.[17] Israel argues that Dutch commercial primacy was not connected to control over the Baltic bulk trade, but depended on its dominance of the 'rich trades' in high-value textiles and spices. War, wartime embargoes, and truces greatly affected trade in these items, and hence he discerns a series of consecutive phases in Dutch trade with political developments serving as turning points.[18] Trade in the Mediterranean also found its place in this pattern of rise and fall, and while Braudel saw the Dutch as a dominant force from the 1590s onwards, Israel judges their position to be very vulnerable in the first decades after their arrival in the Mediterranean.[19] He insists on the limited importance of the trade in Baltic grain in the Mediterranean, on the impact of the Spanish

[16] Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. I, 635-640. The topic was taken up by Brulez who, although he mainly worked on Antwerp's overland trade with Italy, also regarded the arrival of the northern ships as the *fait dominant* of the Mediterranean's economic history in the early modern period, Brulez, "La navigation flamande", 1210. Braudel returned to this subject in *Navires et marchandises*, co-written with Romano. This analysis of shipping and trade in the port which the Grand Dukes of Tuscany constructed in the sixteenth century is based on harbour records, and further elaborates how large numbers of Netherlandish and Hanseatic vessels became the principal intermediaries between the northern seas and the Mediterranean, Braudel and Romano, *Navires et marchandises*, 51, 56. Also Abel, *Hausse und Krisis*. Braudel's student Aymard wrote a complementing study to *Navires et marchandises*, comparing the sixteenth-century grain supply of Venice and Ragusa (Dubrovnik). In the final part of the book, he briefly discusses the arrival of northern grain ships, Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé*, 155-168. For the northerners' presence in the port of Genoa, see Grendi, "I Nordici"; Bicci, "Frutti mediterranei".

[17] Israel, *Dutch primacy*, 3-11 and passim. Israel's emphasis on the effect of politics on economic patterns, the importance he gives to trade in high-value goods, and his alternative periodization have provoked discussion and often disagreement from other historians working on early modern Dutch trade. See, for example, Noordegraaf, "Vooruit en achteruit"; Van Zanden, "Een fraaie synthese", and the response, Israel, "The 'New History'". Traditionally, Dutch trading power has been described as expanding in the decades following the 1570s, reaching its high point in 1648, see De Vries and Van der Woude, *The first modern economy*, 378-412. Cf. Lindblad, "Foreign trade".

[18] Israel discerns a first phase of growth, starting in 1590, after which Dutch trade flourished during the period of the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621), while suffering from Spanish embargoes when war was resumed. It reached its zenith after the peace negotiations at Münster in 1647-1648, but during the years following 1672, when the Dutch Republic came under the combined attack of France and England, decline irrevocably set in.

[19] Israel, *Dutch primacy*, 53-59, 97-100.

embargoes on the *Straatvaart*, and on the fierce competition the Dutch faced from the English, French, and even the Venetians.[20]

Merchant communities

Israel was the first to integrate the story of mercantile communities in foreign ports into the framework of Dutch commercial primacy. In an article which covered all Dutch merchant communities between Cádiz and Constantinople, he described the successive stages of the communities' commercial role, while also offering a glimpse of their cultural and religious character.[21] In Venice, Israel states, an older and larger settlement of Flemish traders existed in the city, while a community of Dutch merchants took shape only after 1609. According to Israel, when transporting Baltic grain during the first phase of the *Straatvaart*, the Dutch mostly provided shipping services for Italian merchants, and had little control over trade themselves, since they produced few luxury goods which met Mediterranean demand. Only when war with Spain temporarily ceased during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621) did they develop into a commercial force to be reckoned with, and in these years the merchant communities in the Mediterranean became a specifically Dutch network under control of the Dutch Protestant state.[22] This pattern fits in with Israel's general periodization of Dutch trade, but it hinges on the distinction between two separate merchant communities, an early Flemish one and a later Dutch one after 1609.[23]

This distinction is problematic and to a large extent artificial, as this book will demonstrate.[24] Nevertheless, by stressing the importance of communities of immigrant traders, Israel's article fits in with a recent trend in the study of the Dutch Republic's

[20] Israel, "The phases", passim. He discerns five phases in Dutch Mediterranean trade between 1590 and 1713, which largely correspond to those he determined for Dutch trade in general. See also his "Trade, politics and strategy", where Israel confronts his findings with those of De Vries and Van der Woude, *The first modern economy*, 379-382, who accept that the resumption of Dutch-Spanish conflict after 1621 severely affected trade in the Mediterranean, but distinguish a rapid recovery in the 1630s.
[21] Israel, "The Dutch merchant colonies", passim.
[22] Ibidem, 87, 89, 92.
[23] Ibidem, 87, 92, 100.
[24] The distinction between groups of *fiamminghi* and *olandesi* traders cannot be found in the actual Venetian source cited by Israel, cf. ASV, VSM, Risposte, r. 144, c. 163r-171r, 31 March 1618, which discusses a petition submitted by the "nattion fiamminga". Some terminological confusion seems to have arisen, since *olandesi* is used only in the inventory of eighteenth-century copies of earlier records from the *Cinque Savi* archives, see ASV, *Inventario Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*, no. 224.

economic prosperity: entrepreneurial history increasingly replaces or complements the macro-economic perspective, which leaves little room for the individual. This development has resulted in a growing interest in the activities of Netherlandish merchants both at home and abroad.[25] Taking up Israel's statement that merchant communities "had always been integral to the mechanism of Dutch world-trade primacy",[26] Jan Willem Veluwenkamp discusses the role of merchant communities in a historiographical article on settlements of Netherlandish traders abroad.

At a time when international trade involved great risks, merchants needed to rely on far-off associates, preferably family members and compatriots to represent their best interests. Hence chains of merchant communities developed as Dutch international trade expanded. Veluwenkamp sees these merchant communities functioning as essential middlemen, connecting regional and international markets, and in his view they formed the strength of Dutch commerce in the second half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century.[27] Veluwenkamp further explored this theme in his book on the small community of Netherlandish traders in early modern Archangel, which portrays traders from the Low Countries who settled there, focusing chiefly on their economic strategies and their position as commercial intermediaries within the Dutch trade system.[28]

The entrepreneurial approach also resulted in the first monograph on Netherlandish trade with the Mediterranean since Wätjen, with the study by Marie-Christine Engels on the trading firm Jansen and Van den Broecke, which operated in the newly created port of Livorno at the start of the seventeenth century.[29] The first part of her book includes an account of the general development of Dutch trade with Italy, but it

[25] See the contributions in Lesger and Noordegraaf (eds.), *Entrepreneurs*, including amongst others Engels, "Dutch traders"; Mitchell, "'It will be easy to make money'"; Voss, "A community in decline?". In sixteenth-century Antwerp many foreign merchant communities were active, which has resulted in a number of studies devoted to single groups of immigrant traders, such as the classic works of Goris, *Étude sur les colonies marchandes méridionales* and Denucé, *Italiaansche koopmansgeslachten* on Southern European merchants. For more recent works, see Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen*; Fagel, "Spanish merchants"; Subacchi, "Italians in Antwerp". On the French in Antwerp, see Coornaert, *Les Français et le commerce international*, while De Smedt, *De Engelse natie* and Ramsay, *The Queen's merchants* studied the English nation. Most works regarding Southern Netherlandish merchants abroad focuses on their contacts with the Iberian peninsula, Stols, *Les marchands flamands*; Benassar, "Marchands flamands et italiens"; Stols, *De Spaanse Brabanders*; Berthe, "Les Flamands".
[26] Israel, *Dutch primacy*, 367.
[27] Veluwenkamp, "Merchant colonies", 162-164. See also Lesger, "De mythe", 16-17.
[28] Veluwenkamp, *Archangel*.
[29] Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*; Engels, "Dutch traders".

also gives a brief outline of the community of *fiamminghi* in Livorno and in Genoa. The latter was by far the smaller community, since the Tuscan free port offered better conditions for settlement, such as significant fiscal privileges. In Livorno, the Netherlanders were also allowed to form a socio-religious organization and to build their own chapel in the *Chiesa della Madonna*.[30] The description of the mercantile communities, though, only serves as a backdrop to Engels' main goal, developed in the second part of the book. Primarily, she wishes to determine the nature and volume of the Jansen and Van den Broecke firm's commerce and to compare her findings with Israel's ideas on trade primacy in the Mediterranean.[31] The strong emphasis on Dutch commercial hegemony has meant that as yet the mutual relations between the resident Netherlandish merchants and their interaction with Italian surroundings have received little attention.

A growing interest in the social and cultural dimensions of immigrant merchant communities has been inspired by the work of Abner Cohen, an anthropologist who first used the term 'trading diasporas' in 1971 to indicate an ethnic group of traders who lived in dispersal, yet who were connected socially and morally.[32] In the early 1980s, the subject was taken up by Philip Curtin, who saw communities of foreign traders serving as cross-cultural brokers, bridging the geographical and cultural distance between their own people and the societies in which they lived. Interrelated communities formed a trade network or trading diaspora, a commercial organization, which Curtin explored in various parts of the world from 2000 BC to the nineteenth century.[33]

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[30] Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 129-133. For local studies on the Netherlanders in Livorno, see Panessa and Del Nista, *Intercultura*; Castagnoli, "La nazione"; Castignoli, "Il libro rosso".

[31] Engels concludes that although Jansen and Van der Broecke traded in luxury products, the carrying of bulk products always remained of great significance, see Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 220, 222.

[32] Cohen, "Cultural strategies", 267.

[33] Curtin, *Cross-cultural trade*, 1-11. Those following the lines set out by Curtin often insist on the natural tendency to collaborate among members of homogeneous ethnic and religious groups. For a recent discussion on religion, family, and a common commercial culture as binding ties, see the collection of case studies included in Baghdiantz McCabe et al. (eds.), *Diaspora entrepreneurial networks*. On the other hand, drawing inspiration from new institutional economics, economic historians have studied mercantile networks as close-knit groups of agents, moved by rational behaviour, see, for example, Greif, "Coordination"; Greif, "The fundamental problem". Ultimately, in Greif's eyes, these informal coalitions would give way to more modern economic institutions which facilitated trade. For a similar linear approach to the evolution of trading organizations in the Low Countries, Gelderblom, "The resolution of commercial conflicts". For a critique of both the anthropological and the institutional economics approaches, see

The interest in the workings of foreign merchant communities ties in with current debates in Venetian historiography, where traditional topics such as the Venetian Republic's commercial rise and subsequent decline have given way to new themes, of which cross-cultural interaction is arguably the most significant.[34] Recent research has shown that a micro-historical approach offers valuable insights into how foreign traders in Venice negotiated their interests. Federica Ruspio has traced the close interaction among Portuguese traders, concentrating on their background, economic activities, and interdependence. She shows how kinship ties, shared Iberian origins, and common commercial interests connected Sephardic and New Christian traders. Together they formed a community which transcended their religious differences and hence the walls of the Venetian ghetto. Ruspio argues that, from a Venetian point of view, the Portuguese merchants - who mainly traded with the Iberian peninsula - helped slow down the decline of the Venetian market.[35]

Another contribution to this new historiographical theme focuses instead on a different group of immigrant traders in Venice. Maria Fusaro studies the English traders from the perspective of English-Venetian economic relations. To the English, Venice was only of secondary importance, since trade with the eastern Mediterranean was conducted through the Levant Company. Because of the great demand from their home country, their main aim in Venice was gaining a share in the trade in currants from the island Zante.[36] Fusaro shows that the English, often young and of lower social rank, formed a small and highly mobile community of traders, who in the currant trade closely collaborated with Greek merchants, coming from the Venetian dominions.[37]

The work by both Ruspio and Fusaro demonstrates that it is only by analysing the community of immigrant merchants, their background, trading activities, and internal ties

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Trivellato, "Juifs de Livourne", esp. 585-591; Studnicki-Gizbert, "La 'nation' portugaise", esp. 628-631, in the recent *Annales* issue dedicated to merchant networks.

[34] For a discussion of new paths of Venetian research, Horodowich, "The new Venice", esp. 4-6 for recent works on the cultural and economic exchanges between Venice and the East.

[35] Ruspio, "La presenza portoghese", 234-235; Ruspio, "La rappresentazione". For other recent works on immigrants in Venice, in this case silk-weavers from Lucca, see Molà, *The silk industry*; Molà, *La comunità dei lucchesi*.

[36] By closely collaborating with the Greeks, the English eventually succeeded in supplanting Venetian commerce, see Fusaro, "Les Anglais et les Grecs" as well as her "Coping with transition" and *Uva passa*.

[37] Fusaro, "The English mercantile community", 23-24.

that their specific position within Venetian society can be properly understood.[38] Focusing on a single case can lead to reductive conclusions. For instance, in an article discussing immigrant traders in early modern Venice, Alexander Cowan examines one merchant from the Low Countries, the consul Giacomo Stricher, whose daughter married into the Venetian patriciate.[39] Cowan argues that in addition to the statutory barriers the Venetian government imposed on foreign traders, Stricher's position in Venetian society was further rendered insecure by his lack of kinship ties with Venetians. Also, most of Stricher's social and business contacts were with resident Netherlandish merchants, leading Cowan to conclude that the position of the Netherlandish merchants in Venice was in the tradition of the enclave of foreign merchants, "segregated and controlled by the urban authorities".[40] The case presented by Cowan raises some interesting questions regarding the levels of restriction and control to which the Netherlandish traders were subjected, and whether these traders' internal cohesion strengthened the barriers between foreigners and native Venetians. Yet the mere fact that Stricher's daughter was to marry into the patriciate defies Cowan's strict dichotomy between Netherlandish outsiders and Venetian host society.

Approach and sources

Representing these immigrant merchants as hapless foreigners at the mercy of a rigid state does not do justice to the interaction that developed between the often long-term resident merchants and their Venetian environment. This study addresses the different aspects of the Netherlanders' arrival and presence, such as their economic activities, mutual ties, collective association, and integration in Venetian society with the aim of showing how the relation between this particular group of immigrants and the Venetian state was continually renegotiated. Results from extensive research in the Venetian archives have been combined with archival material from the Netherlands and literature

[38] Cf. also Subrahmanyam, "Introduction", xiii, who advocates the study of merchant communities as concrete, collective groups, defined by such factors as marital behaviour, religion, and ethnicity.
[39] Cowan, "Foreigners and the city".
[40] Ibidem, 53.

relating to the Antwerp diaspora to study this merchant community in a comprehensive international perspective.

The first chapter of this study furnishes the background against which the settlement of the Netherlandish merchants in the city is to be understood, starting with an introduction of the city and the specific nature of Venetian society.[41] Venice took pride in its dominance of international commerce, yet by the start of the seventeenth century, its position was more vulnerable than it once had been. Because its commercial policies had been shaped when Venice enjoyed its Golden Age, to understand the impact of subsequent changes this chapter describes how the city-state rose to political and economic power. This is followed by an overview of the Republic's commercial decline and by the examination of the position of three other important groups of immigrant traders - the Germans, the Ottomans, and the Jews - to illustrate the differing levels of control imposed upon immigrant merchants.

The next two chapters chronologically investigate the commercial activities of the Netherlandish immigrant traders, their position on the Venetian market, and their relations with the emporia of the North. Starting with a description of Netherlandish-Venetian trade relations prior to 1590, Chapter 2 then examines the Netherlanders' commercial activities in Venice in the 1590s, taking up the discussion of their role during this crucial decade. The severe famines that held the Mediterranean in their grip in the 1590s also greatly afflicted Venice and made the city dependent on deliveries of cereals

[41] Lane, *Venice* has for a long time been the most authoritative one-volume history of Venice, though its main focus is on the development of Venice's economy and political institutions, with less attention paid to the social, religious, and cultural history of the city-state. Lane's book was severly criticized by Cochrane and Kirshner because of its overly idealist interpretation of Venetian republicanism in their "Deconstructing Lane's Venice". Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice* is a recent and innovative one-volume reconstruction of Venice's history from its origins up to the sixteenth century. Crouzet-Pavan shows how the structure of the city and Venetian society were shaped in a constant interplay with the natural environment. Comprehensive surveys of Venetian history include the recent *Storia di Venezia*, 12 vols., and Arnaldi and Pastore Stocchi (eds.), *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols. The essays contained in Hale, *Renaissance Venice* reflect on the defeat at Agnadello from political, economic, cultural, and religious perspectives, and show the state of affairs in Venetian history in the early 1970s. The contributions in Martin and Romano (eds.), *Venice reconsidered* cover a broader thematic and chronological scope and, intended as a response to Hale's volume, demonstrate how Venetian research developed in the three decades after 1973. Instead of a comprehensive overview, *Reconsidering Venice* offers a dynamic and varied collection of essays, loosely grouped together around two themes: 'politics and culture' and 'society and culture'. For historiographical surveys of Venetian history, see Davidson, "'In dialogue with the past'"; Grubb, "When myths lose power". Horodowich, "The new Venice" reviews the most recent developments, especially in the field of gender history.

from the Baltic. Based on an investigation of Venetian archival material, such as the records of the Venetian Grain Office, decisions made by the Senate concerning the city's food supply, and notarial records, this chapter offers a reappraisal of the Netherlanders' involvement in this particular branch of commerce.

Chapter 3 looks at the way the Netherlandish merchants expanded their trade in Venice in the decades after the start of the *Straatvaart*. In Venice, no records of port officials or customs offices have survived, which makes it necessary to draw on different sources to document their commercial activities. The archives of the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*, the five patricians in charge of supervising mercantile activities in Venice, have yielded a wealth of information. The *Risposte* series of the *Cinque Savi*, which holds reports on commercial matters, has been systematically examined for the period 1587-1662, uncovering a total of 101 reports relating to Netherlandish traders.[42] This material has been combined with notarial records, court cases involving Netherlandish merchants, and fiscal records from Amsterdam to piece together the development of trade after the 1590s.

Chapter 4 examines in closer detail the settlement of Netherlandish merchants, asking how many of them actually resided in Venice and what was the nature of their mutual relationships. To what extent did they share a provenance and religious affiliation? And how did practices such as the forming of marital and baptismal ties, reciprocal commercial services, and gift giving cultivate and enhance the level of cohesion among the traders? Last wills have been used to reconstruct the merchants' social relations, complemented by notarial records, baptismal records, and marriage contracts.[43] The specification of funeral arrangements and donations in these last wills

[42] This period corresponds to the registers 138-155 in ASV, VSM, Risposte. The workings of the *Cinque Savi* are explained in Borgherini-Scarabellin, *Il magistrato dei Cinque Savi*, still the only study dedicated to this important Venetian institution. See also Tiepolo (ed.), *Archivio di Stato di Venezia*, 980-981.

[43] For each testament registered with a notary in Venice, an entry was made in the chronologically ordered *Registri testamenta virorum* or *mulierum*, which contained the name of the testator, the notary, the date the testament was drawn up, and the day on which the testament was made public after the death of the testator. I have looked through the following consecutive registers: ASV, NT, Registro testamenta virorum, nos. 62 for the period March 1609-February 1629 (m.v.); 64, March 1630-February 1649 (m.v.); and 66, March 1650-February 1672 (m.v.). Contemporary alphabetical indexes of names on the *Registri* exists (the *Rubrica testamenta virorum*), which has been used to cross-check the information from the *Registri*. *Rubrica* no.61 corresponds with *Registro* no.62, *Rubrica* 63 with *Registro* 64, et cetera. The testaments themselves then can be traced in the series *Notarile testamenti*. However, not every entry necessarily corresponds to a testament, because when a testator decided to draw up a new will, the old one was

has also yielded information on the religious sympathies of the testators, while the archives of the Venetian Inquisition have been used to see whether Protestant merchants were subject to persecution.

The next chapter takes up the questions on the level of government control, by examining the different strategies adopted to counter the restrictive Venetian policies, both by individuals, such as requests for Venetian citizenship, and by Netherlandish merchants as a body. The *nazione fiamminga* coordinated these collective responses, but in contrast to other groups of foreign merchants, no formal communal regulations or privileges were laid down in Venetian jurisprudence for the Netherlanders. Also, the *nazione fiamminga* never formed its own archive, resulting in a complete lack of source material, such as statutes, membership lists, or records of meetings. Such sources do exist for the nation's counterpart in Livorno, which is why Livornese material has been used to raise questions regarding the nature of such an organization.[44]

Collective petitions submitted by the Netherlanders have been an important source in determining the character of the *nazione* in Venice. All supplications presented between 1590 and 1650 to the *Collegio*, the council that reviewed matters before they were discussed in the Senate, have been examined.[45] In response to a Netherlandish petition, the *Cinque Savi* were often asked to draw up a report, which gives insight into the position taken by the Venetian authorities. Whereas the nation's efforts to obtain commercial privileges are documented, the social character of the organization is much more elusive. Nonetheless, based on sources such as travel journals, this chapter attempts to show how the merchants' collective expressed the members' interdependency and

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annulled and restituted. A systematic search has resulted in 34 testaments of Netherlanders. A separate series which registers *nuncupativi* testaments (dictated by the testate in the presence of two witnesses when death seemed imminent) contains hardly any wills of Netherlandish merchants at all, probably because as immigrant merchants engaged in international trade they preferred the security of an autograph testament to manage their affairs. The *nuncupativi* registers, which contain alphabetical entries, examined are nos. 26 (1610-1626) and 27 (1626-1641).

[44] On the Netherlandish community in Livorno, see Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 129-133; Castignoli, "Il libro rosso"; Castagnoli, "La nazione".

[45] All submitted petitions to the *Collegio* for the series *Risposte di dentro* between 1589 and March 1651 have been examined. During this period, the nation submitted 33 collective petitions, while 83 other supplications were presented by individual Netherlanders, including one merchant's widow. The series *Risposte di dentro* contains petitions to which magistracies within Venice offered a reply (Petitions in the series *Risposte di fuori* were referred to magistracies outside the city). Contrary to the name, the series does not contain the actual replies (*risposte*), but the original petition and an entry indicating the magistracies asked by the *Collegio* to evaluate the request.

offered different forms of social assistance to individual immigrant merchants. The Netherlandish nation also played a role in the reception of diplomats from the Dutch Republic, and the final part of Chapter 5 investigates the contacts between the Netherlandish merchants and the envoys sent by the States General, based on the diplomats' letters and reports as well as on records from the States General and the Venetian authorities.

The last chapter pursues the theme of the interaction between the immigrant traders and the Venetian urban environment. How convincing is the argument that these merchants, who held the key to the valuable trade connections with northern Europe, actually formed a segregated enclave? Chapter 6 starts with an examination of the Netherlanders' homes in the city, asking whether they needed to comply with restrictive government regulations or whether the merchants themselves chose to live in close vicinity to one another. In addition to an analysis of the Netherlanders' residential pattern, the chapter explores domestic interiors, with probate inventories providing evidence about the merchants' lifestyles.

Chapter 6 also addresses the relationships between the Netherlanders and native Venetians, by looking closely at their contacts with business connections, neighbours, household servants, concubines, and, in a few cases, spouses. As the case of Stricher's daughter demonstrates, at times the Netherlandish merchants even attempted to forge marriage bonds with the patriciate. The *prove di nobiltà*, the examinations made into the background of those women wishing to marry into the patriciate, are used to examine these marital alliances. By the end of the period under analysis, the Venetian patriciate was left with no other option than to open up its ranks to new families. Based on archival records such as anonymous pamphlets in which Venetian patricians expressed their feelings on the inclusion of new families, the last paragraph investigates the dynastic politics of two Netherlandish families seeking entry into the patriciate. It shows how the changing circumstances between 1590 and 1650 influenced not just Venice's economic policies, but also the composition of its elite.

Chapter 1. Venice

Entering the city

To arrive in Venice, ships had to pass the sand bars (*lidi*) which separated the Adriatic Sea from the lagoon. There were three openings in the *lidi*, one at Chioggia in the south, at Malamocco in the centre, and one at San Nicolò, which was closest to San Marco (Ill. 1.1). By the late fifteenth century, the entrance at San Nicolò had become increasingly silted up and very difficult to navigate for large ships. Merchantmen therefore tended to use the bigger harbour entrance at Malamocco.[1] Once they had entered the lagoon, shipmasters had to rely on Venetian pilots to navigate the channel which stretched from the littoral barrier towards the city, and submit themselves and their ships to the control of the Venetian harbour officials. Freighting bills had to be declared to custom officials, and if the ship had come from a harbour suspected of the plague, the entire vessel with its crew and cargo had to be quarantined on the Lazzaretto Islands.[2] After completing these procedures the ship entered the Bacino di San Marco, the inner harbour of the city, and, depending on the vessel's draft, either moored at the quays in front of the Ducal Palace or went for anchor in the Bacino, unloading its cargo in lighters. The inner harbour saw a constant to-and-fro of vessels of all shapes and sizes, a mix of Venetian and foreign merchantmen, lighters, and *burchi* (barges) that transported goods from the harbour of Venice to its hinterland and shuttled provisions back to the city, while innumerable gondolas darted in between the bigger boats.[3]

Coming ashore at the quays of the Bacino, arrivals stood right in the heart of the Venetian Republic. The Ducal Palace was both the home of the doge and the centre of government, while the adjacent Basilica was the chapel of the Ducal Palace and the religious heart of the city. The Piazza San Marco, lined with booths and market stalls, stretched in front of the Basilica, and here Venetian patricians convened and deliberated and civic processions converged.[4] Every visitor

[1] Morachiello, "Le bocche lagunari", 81, 88.
[2] Lane, *Venice*, 17. On the workings of the *Lazzaretti*, see also Morachiello, "Lazzaretti".
[3] One of the unique characteristics of Venice was the all-pervasiveness of maritime activities in the city. For the interplay between the urban landscape, the lagoon, and the Adriatic, see Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice* and Crouzet-Pavan, "Toward an ecological understanding". For Venice's relation with the sea, also the essays in Tenenti and Tucci (eds.), *Il mare*.
[4] On civic processions, see Muir, *Civic ritual*, 185-212.

documenting his stay in Venice mentioned how the Piazza teemed with people. Thomas Coryate described how the square was the scene of

> that famous concourse and meeting of so many distinct and sundry nations twise a day, (…) where also the Venetian long-gowned Gentlemen doe meete together in great troupes. For you shall not see as much as one Venetian there of the Patrician ranke without his blacke gowne and tippet. There you may see many Polonians, Slavonians, Persians, Grecians, Turks, Jewes, Christians of all the famousest regions of Christendome, and each nation distinguished from another by their proper and peculiar habits.[5]

The commercial heart of the city was at Rialto, which was reached from Piazza San Marco either by boat, following the Canal Grande, or by foot, passing through the Merceria, Venice's main shopping street. The area around the *campo* (square) beside the church of San Giacomo di Rialto was devoted to trading activities, and a twelfth-century inscription on the apse of the church invoked the traders in its vicinity: "Around this temple let the merchants' law be just, the weights true, and their contracts fair".[6] Merchants met here amidst shops and warehouses to do business and exchange news; they could call upon the services of notaries, moneychangers, and bankers, while the Republic's magistracies governing commercial transactions occupied adjacent offices. The large *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, a hostelry and commercial entrepôt for German merchants, was located on the other side of the Canal Grande at the foot of the bridge.[7]

Piazza San Marco and Rialto formed the core of the city that had originally been a conglomerate of autonomous islands. Rialto had been settled in the sixth century, and subsequently seventy parishes were formed, each representing a separate island community, with its own church, public square, and palaces of the wealthy, surrounded by poorer dwellings. Over the centuries, as the Venetian population grew, the urban administration became more centralized, and bridges and ferries increasingly joined the different islands together.

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[5] Coryate, *Coryats crudities*, 175.

[6] The inscription reads "Hoc circa templum sit ius mercantibus aequum, pondera nec vergant, nec sit conventio prava", cited in Mueller, *The Venetian money market*, 37.

[7] For the development of the Rialto area and the commercial activities, see Calabi, *The market*, 56-59, 130-133; Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice*, 150-165. On financial operations at Rialto, see Mueller, *The Venetian money market*, 33-40. For the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, see below, 37-39.

Consequently by the twelfth century, the parishes had lost much of their autonomous character.[8] The city was partitioned into six administrative districts known as *sestieri*, with three on each side of the Canal Grande, the city's main artery and, at the same time, its most prestigious residential area. This division remains in force today, with the *sestieri* of San Marco, Castello, and Cannaregio on the side of the Ducal Palace, and on the opposing bank, the districts of San Polo, Santa Croce, and Dorsoduro. The *sestieri*, in turn, consisted of different *contrade* which corresponded to parishes (Map 1.1).[9]

The *sestieri* of San Marco and San Polo were dominated by the political activities around the Ducal Palace and the commercial transactions at Rialto, respectively. Castello was home to the Arsenal, the famous state shipyard. This enormous industrial complex, surrounded by high walls, dominated the eastern part of Venice and provided an impressive demonstration of the Republic's maritime power. All important foreign dignitaries were shown around the dockyards, and the Arsenal became an obligatory stop for travellers visiting Venice.[10] Nevertheless, since the Venetian war fleet was constructed there, tourists were not permitted to look around freely. Arnout Hellemans Hooft in 1649, at the time of yet another Venetian-Ottoman war, refrained from making elaborate notes because he had been warned not to raise "bad suspicions".[11]

Other industrial activities, such as cloth-making and dyeing, were mostly situated near the edges of the city. The district of Cannaregio, for example, was the location of dye works, the city's slaughterhouse, the soap factories, and the hub of the trade in wood. By order of the Great Council the manufacturing of glass was concentrated outside the city, on the island of Murano, where everything from glass windowpanes to chandeliers, drinking glasses, chaplet beads, and mirrors was produced.[12]

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[8] Romano, *Patricians and popolani*, 17-18.
[9] Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice*, 203.
[10] Ibidem, 143-144; Concina, *L'Arsenale*; Concina, "La casa dell'Arsenale". See Lane, *Venice*, 361-364 on the management of the Arsenal and the construction of the Venetian war fleet.
[11] "Ik souw meer aengeteijkent hebben, indien 't mij niet gewaerschuwt geworden waer dat, om alle quaede suspicie whegh te nemen, te laeten", Hellemans Hooft, *Een naekt beeldt*, 84.
[12] Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice*, 165-176. For Venice's woollen industry, see Panciera, *L'arte matrice*; Sella, "The rise and fall", and Sella, *Commerci e industrie*. On the glass production in Venice, Trivellato, *Fondamenta dei vetrai*. Venice forbade glass workers to leave Venetian territory, but some did set up workshops in other cities, such as Amsterdam, De Roever, "Venetiaans glas".

The inhabitants of Venice

Early modern Venice was the largest city in the Mediterranean region after Naples and Constantinople, and around 1607 its population approached 190,000 inhabitants, while more than two million people lived in its subject territories. Epidemics could cause widespread death in an often overpopulated urban area. Approximately a third of the Venetian population fell victim to the plague in 1575-1577, and again in 1629-1631.[13] In spite of these demographic difficulties, Venice remained one of the major cities in Europe, admired for its remarkable political and social stability. Contemporaries often described the Venetian Republic as the ideal state, and these accounts have become the basis of what is known as the myth of Venice.[14] An important element supporting the myth was the idea that the hierarchical organization of Venetian society into three legally defined orders - two of which had very specific privileges - prevented outbreaks of internal discord.

At the top of this hierarchy stood the patricians, the Venetian ruling class which made up around four to five per cent of the total population. Which families were considered noble had been determined at the *Serrata* (closing), a law implemented in 1297, which equated membership in the Great Council with nobility.[15] From that moment on, noble status was hereditary and transmitted through the male lineage. Only adult male nobles of legitimate birth could enter the Great Council and participate in Venetian political life, which meant that they could sit on the various councils, be sent abroad as ambassadors, govern a subject city, or even be elected doge, the head of the Venetian state. By the sixteenth century, all patrician male children had to be registered in the *Libri d'Oro*, or Golden Books, which fell under the control of the *Avogaria di Comun*, the state attorneys.

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[13] Lane, *Venice*, 19. About 50,000 inhabitants fell victim to the plague epidemic of 1575-1577, but the demographic recovery in the following years, mainly through immigration, was quite rapid. After the epidemic of 1629-1631, however, the population level did not recover as quickly. Economic difficulties in the first decades of the seventeenth century caused a loss of demographic resilience: a decline in the number of inhabitants had probably already set in during the 1620s, while a depression in sectors such as the woollen industry made Venice less attractive to immigrants, Pezzolo, *Il fisco*, 151. On the population of Venice in general, the best works are still Beloch, "La popolazione" and Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione*.

[14] For a good explanation of the myth of the ideal and tolerant Venetian Republic, Muir, *Civic ritual*, 13-61. For the visualization of the myth, see Rosand, *Myths of Venice*. A countermyth, or rather anti-myth, developed alongside the idea of the just and benevolent republic, portraying Venice instead as a repressive state, governed by a decadent oligarchy, Martin and Romano, "Reconsidering Venice", 16.

[15] The reform of 1297 formed the basis for the establishment of a distinct ruling class in Venice, but research has shown that noble status continuously evolved and was redefined, both before and after the *Serrata*, see Rösch, "The *Serrata*" and Chojnacki, "Identity and ideology".

During Venice's Golden Age, the main source of the patricians' wealth had been commerce: most patricians at one time during their career were merchants or captains of the state galleys, occupations that in Venice, unlike in many other societies, were considered fitting for a nobleman. However, as Venetian commerce started to dwindle at the beginning of the sixteenth century, nobles increasingly retired from trade and preferred safer investments in land.[16] To conserve or increase their prosperity and influence, noble families also resorted to a policy of restricted marriages, seeking advantageous marital alliances for only a limited number of their children.[17] This practice reduced the number of noble births, while the two plague epidemics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also claimed many victims among the patriciate. Consequently, while in 1527, 2,570 nobles sat on the Great Council, their number had dropped to roughly 1,500 a century later. As their numbers declined, finding suitable marriage partners within the patriciate became more and more difficult, leading even more patrician men to remain bachelors or marry a wealthy non-patrician girl.[18] Within the restricted group of Venetian patricians differences in wealth also became increasingly marked, and fewer noble families could afford the costs connected with state service.[19] When, during the second half of the seventeenth century, the Republic was feeling the financial strain of a series of wars with the Ottoman Empire, it decided to take the exceptional measure of admitting those who could pay the enormous sum of 100,000 ducats as an entry fee. After having been a closed hereditary caste for almost three centuries, the patriciate for the first time admitted new families, including two merchant families from the Low Countries.[20]

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[16] Tucci, "The psychology of the Venetian merchant", 346-352; Luzzatto, *Storia economica*, 133. For the economic activities of the patriciate, particularly the much-discussed shift from maritime trade to landed property, see Pullan, "The occupations and investments of the Venetian nobility"; Tucci, "The psychology of the Venetian merchant"; Woolf, "Venice and the Terraferma". Cf. Gullino, "I patrizi veneziani".

[17] Hunecke, "Matrimonio"; Davis, *The decline*, 54ff. Disparities in prestige existed among the noble families, depending on their antiquity, affluence, and political power, and even within a single noble house the various branches could differ greatly in standing. On the conservation of wealth in one patrician family, the Donà, see Davis, *A Venetian family*. On patrician marital policies, see the seminal work of Stanley Chojnacki, e.g. his, "Dowries and kinsmen" and the twelve previously published articles collected in Chojnacki (ed.), *Women and men*.

[18] For Venetian patricians marrying daughters of Netherlandish merchants with a large dowry, see below, Chapter 6, 172-175. Marrying a husband from a lower social class, however, was not an option for patrician women, and a growing number of patrician daughters were destined to become nuns: by the end of the sixteenth century, sixty per cent of patrician girls joined one of Venice's many convents, Sperling, *Convents*, passim.

[19] Megna, *Ricchezza e povertà*, 104-182.

[20] Raines, *L'invention*, 633-653; Cowan, "New families", 56-57. On the admittance of the two Netherlandish families Van Axel and Ghelthof to the patriciate, see below, Chapter 6, 175-183.

Immediately below the patriciate came the class of the *cittadini originari*, or citizens-by-birth. Members of this social group had access to jobs in the Venetian bureaucracy, where they formed the stable administrative backbone for the ever-changing noble councils. The *cittadinanza originaria* also entailed specific commercial privileges, allowing access to the guilds and to trade between Venice and the Levant, a right restricted to Venetian noble and citizen merchants.[21] Membership in the citizenry was ill-defined until the second half of the sixteenth century, when the criteria became increasingly selective. A *cittadino* had to be native-born and he, his father, and his grandfather had to be of legitimate birth. As a secondary elite, making up about seven per cent of the Venetian population, the citizens mirrored the patricians' preoccupation with status and birth. For example, *cittadino* membership was registered in a *Libro d'Argento*, similar to the *Libri d'Oro* of the patriciate.[22] Although nobles were admitted as members to the prestigious Venetian lay confraternities or *Scuole*, they were not allowed to hold office. Citizens dominated the *Scuole*'s administration and served as chief agents of charitable activities. Through corporate patronage, especially dedicated to the construction of lavishly decorated meeting halls for the confraternities, the *cittadini originari* could express their privileged status in Venetian society.[23]

With no specific political or professional privileges, the *popolani* included the great majority of Venetian inhabitants, representing about ninety per cent of the population and encompassing artisans, courtesans, *gondolieri* as well as Arsenal workers, poor day labourers, but also shopkeepers who in wealth could outstrip many a patrician.[24] In practice these three social groups were not as rigidly separate as Venetian legal definitions would suggest, and recent research depicts a much more fluid and flexible image of Venetian society. Patronage networks could extend well beyond the borders of legal status, and intermarriage between male patricians and girls from wealthy non-patrician families did occur.[25]

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[21] Grubb, "Elite citizens", 341. For an analysis of the citizen class as a bureaucratic elite, see Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati*.

[22] Bellavitis gives an extensive discussion of the legal definitions and requirements of Venetian citizen status in Bellavitis, *Identité*, esp. Chapter 1. See also her "Mythe" and "'Per cittadini metterete...'". Grubb, "Elite citizens" shows that the citizenry was far from a homogenous group, but that citizenship status was increasingly formalized during the second half of the sixteenth century.

[23] For the role of the *Scuole*, see Pullan, *Rich and poor*, esp. Chapter 4 and Brown, "Le 'Scuole'".

[24] For works that study the *popolani* outside the context of patrician or *cittadino* charity, see, for example, Romano, *Housecraft* and Davis, *Shipbuilders*. Recently, *popolano* women are receiving more attention as well, see Hacke, *Women, sex and marriage*; Ferraro, *Marriage wars*; Ambrosini, "Toward a social history of women".

[25] Martin and Romano, "Reconsidering Venice", 19.

From Byzantine subjects to independent republic

An exception among Italian states, Venice had no ancient Roman foundations. It developed after the fall of the Roman Empire, when refugees, who were fleeing the waves of Goths, Huns, and Lombards that invaded Italy, sought safety in the marshes of the Po estuary. By the eighth century, the cluster of islands around Rivoalto, the future Rialto, had developed into a settlement that was subject to the authority of Byzantium.[26] The Byzantine Empire gradually weakened over the next centuries and the Venetians became increasingly autonomous. A symbolic turning point was reached when the Venetians chose Saint Mark over their original patron Theodore, a Greek warrior saint who attested to Venice's status as a Byzantine province. Legend has it that in 828 two Venetian merchants stole the body of Saint Mark from Alexandria and brought it to Venice, where the Basilica di San Marco was built to house his relics, making tangible the special relationship the now independent city-state had with Saint Mark.[27]

As Venice grew, protecting its commerce in the Adriatic became the main priority and the city developed into a significant maritime power. The transition from dependence to superiority over Byzantium was completed at the start of the thirteenth century, when Venice was commissioned to provide the Fourth Crusade (1201-1204) with transport to the Holy Land. The crusaders were unable to pay the Venetians, who then settled for the crusaders' assistance in reconquering the Dalmatian port of Zara (Zadar), a former Venetian colony. After having subdued Zara, the Venetians successfully diverted the direction of the crusade from Jerusalem to Constantinople, where the succession to the imperial throne was causing problems. Once before the walls of Constantinople, the crusaders' intervention degenerated into the assault and subsequent sack of the city in 1204. The Byzantine Empire was now essentially up for grabs, which opened the way for important territorial expansion. The Venetians were granted possession of three-eights of the city of Constantinople and acquired the island of Crete, strategically positioned on the direct route from the Ionian Sea to Syria or Egypt, as well as Negroponte in the northern Aegean and Modon on the Morea (Peloponnese). Their string of naval bases and the

[26] The first doge or *dux*, appointed in 697, was in fact a military commander who received his orders from the Byzantines, although later Venetian chroniclers would insist that Venice had been independent since its earliest beginnings, Lane, *Venice*, 3-5.
[27] For the Venetian cult of Saint Mark, Rosand, *Myths of Venice*, 47-95 and Muir, *Civic ritual*, 78-92.

recapture of Zara which gave them control over Dalmatia provided the Venetians with maritime pre-eminence in the eastern Mediterranean.[28]

In the centuries following its independence from Byzantium, Venice's power structure developed into a political model that would become renowned all over Europe. The Venetians themselves saw their state as the only true successor to republican Rome, with a constitution based on a harmonious combination of monarchy, represented by the doge; aristocracy, represented by the Senate and the Council of Ten; and democracy, by the Great Council. The stability of the Venetian Republic was emphasized by the city-state's official historians, but far from being immutable, its constitution was a constantly changing political organism.[29] The doge had evolved from a Byzantine magistrate to a monarch of unlimited power in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries to finally an elected guardian of the Republic, whose authority was increasingly subject to constraints. At his election, the doge had to swear to the *promissione*, a list of restrictive obligations that was revised and amended each time a new doge took office. He was not allowed to leave Venice without permission or receive foreign ambassadors privately, nor could he write or open official letters except in the presence of his counsellors. If his actions were considered damaging to the Republic, he could be forced to abdicate. Even though the doge's authority was limited, he and the procurators of Saint Mark's were the only officials appointed for life, while other magistrates were usually elected for just one year. The doge could also directly influence decision-making in the councils and propose laws. More importantly, he was the personification of the state and represented the continuity of the Venetian Republic, a status which was expressed in the elaborate civic rituals of Venice.[30]

If the doge formed the top of Venice's pyramidal political structure, the Great Council formed the base. The different collegial bodies operating on intermediate levels checked the powers of other committees, producing an extremely intricate constitutional framework. The Great Council had been the centre of power in the thirteenth century and was responsible for electing the majority of Venetian magistrates and members of other councils, but it became a

[28] Lane, *Venice*, 29-43. For recent studies on ethnicity and identity in the Venetian colony of Crete during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see MacKee, *Uncommon dominion*; O'Connell, "The Venetian patriciate in the Mediterranean".

[29] The following draws heavily on the perspicuous description of the development of Venice's complex political structure in Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice*, 183-210. See also Lane, *Venice*, 87-117, 251-273. For the influence of Venetian republicanism on the political thinkers of the Republic of the United Provinces, see Haitsma Mulier, *The myth of Venice and Dutch republican thought*.

[30] For the rituals involving the doge, see Muir, *Civic ritual*, 251-296, esp. 281-289 for the ducal elections.

much too large and unwieldy body for frequent deliberations. The Senate therefore developed as the main political institution which dealt with matters relating to commerce, diplomatic missions, and the movements of the Venetian fleet. Initially consisting of sixty patricians, it grew over the centuries into a body of 230 members.[31] All matters presented to the Senate were first reviewed by the *Collegio*, a sort of council of ministers which consisted of the doge, his six counsellors, and the three *capi* of the Council of Forty, the main court of appeals in Venice. In addition to these ten men, who were collectively known as the *Signoria*, the *Collegio* included the six *Savi del Consiglio*, the five ministers of War and Mainland (*Savi di Terraferma*), and the five ministers of the Marine (*Savi agli Ordini*). The *Collegio* received reports from officials, met with foreign envoys, and reviewed all incoming petitions before passing them on to the relevant governmental bodies.[32]

The *Stato da Mar*, Venice's overseas dominions, formed the basis for a mercantile empire, insuring that on their way from the lagoon to the Levant, merchant galleys could dock at different harbours all belonging to the Venetian state to take on fresh water and stores (Map 1.2). But Venice's commercial hegemony in the Mediterranean seldom went unchallenged. After the middle of the thirteenth century, Genoa developed into Venice's main rival. The two city-states fought four naval wars over the next century (between 1257-1270, 1293-1299, 1350-1355, and 1378-1381), but in subsequent decades, Genoa fell prey to internal political chaos, which allowed Venice to become the dominant power in the Levant.[33]

Italian competition temporarily declined, but now Venice had to face a new redoubtable enemy in the eastern Mediterranean. The Ottoman Empire took Constantinople in 1453, and although merchants in the Venetian colony had assisted in the city's defence, Venice chose to negotiate a treaty with Sultan Mehmet II: against the payment of a two per cent tax on all transactions, it would be granted freedom to trade in the Ottoman Empire and allowed to maintain a Venetian quarter in Constantinople under the rule of a Venetian ambassador, the *bailo*.[34] The Ottomans continued to expand their territory and gradually but inevitably took

[31] Lane, *Venice*, 95-96.
[32] Ibidem, 253-256. For a discussion of the petitions submitted by Netherlandish merchants to the *Collegio*, see below, Chapter 5, 125-137.
[33] Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice*, 73-77; Lane, *Venice*, 29-43.
[34] Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice*, 81; Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*. On the Venetian seaborne connections linking East and West, MacNeill, *Venice: the hinge of Europe*.

possession of Venetian colonies as well: Negroponte fell in 1470, Modon was lost, and the Ottomans conquered most of the Venetian fortresses in Greece. Although Venice acquired Cyprus in 1489, the *Stato da Mar* was under increasing pressure. The importance of trade relations with Ottoman lands was such that Venice often found itself trying to balance both territorial and commercial interests, and constantly had to choose between going to war or settling for peace treaties. When the Ottomans captured Cyprus in 1570, the Republic was obviously forced to respond. An alliance designed to halt the Ottoman advances before they reached the Italian peninsula was forged between the Venetians, Philip II of Spain, and Pope Pius V. On 7 October 1571, the fleet of the Holy League under the command of Don Juan dealt a crushing defeat to the Muslim forces at Lepanto (Navpaktos), showing the Christian world that the Ottomans were not invincible. Celebrations in Rome and Venice lasted for weeks.[35] But the Holy League proved a very flimsy alliance and, only two years later, Venice concluded a secret treaty with the Ottoman Empire, surrendering its claims to Cyprus and paying the sultan 300,000 ducats over three years in return for peace.

Although much of Venice's military and financial resources had been employed to defend its Mediterranean dominions, the Republic had also established an impressive territorial state on the Italian mainland. The expansion on the Terraferma was driven by the need to have access to the network of overland and river trading routes in northern Italy. At the same time, Venice was eager to suppress any political rivals in its direct hinterland, intervening either diplomatically or militarily. One of Venice's earliest attempts at dominating the mainland was a 1336 alliance formed with Florence against Verona, which ended the rule of the Veronese Della Scala family. The wars with Genoa temporarily halted Venetian expansion, but after 1381 Venice first conquered the town of Treviso, then Vicenza in the spring of 1404, and both Verona and Padua a year later. By 1420, the Venetians had also taken Friuli, turning the Republic into one of the main territorial states on the Italian peninsula, next to Milan, Florence, the Papal States, and the Kingdom of Naples.[36]

By 1500, the *Stato da Terra* had reached its maximum size, stretching from Friuli to Ravenna and from the Alps to the Adriatic (Map 1.3), but the Republic had overplayed its hand and had made too many enemies. In 1508, the League of Cambrai brought together in an alliance

[35] Muir, *Civic ritual*, 214-215.
[36] Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice*, 128-137.

against Venice almost every power in Europe, including the pope, France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire joined by the Duchy of Milan, England, Scotland, Florence, and the Swiss. Venice nearly collapsed under the pressure of the League of Cambrai, being routed at Agnadello in May 1509 and losing most of its mainland possessions. The enemies came so close to the city that the Venetians could see the watch-fires of the League's forces flickering on the shore of the lagoon. The shock of the defeat shook Venice to the bone and caused a change in its political orientation, which became less expansionist, even if the Republic at the end of the war regained most of its lost territory.[37]

A new threat to Venetian independence developed as Spain extended its territory on the Italian peninsula. Having already incorporated the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, Charles V fought out much of the Habsburg-Valois struggles on Italian soil: he conquered Florence in 1530, where he installed the pro-Habsburg Medici family, and claimed the Duchy of Milan in 1535. The Republic of Genoa also joined the Habsburg side. Charles' son, Philip II, consolidated the Spanish possessions in Italy and, by the late sixteenth century, only Venice and the Papal States were not under Spanish control. Though occasionally allying with Spain against the Ottomans, Venetians were extremely suspicious of Habsburg domination, hemmed in as they were by the Holy Roman Empire to the North and the Duchy of Milan to the West.

After Agnadello, Venice avoided warfare on the mainland, trying instead to maintain its position by diplomatic manoeuvring between the French and Spanish powers. By the second half of the sixteenth century, however, the *Giovani* (the Young), a faction of Venetian patricians opposed to Habsburg influence, was on the rise. Because the Habsburg rulers often acted in concert with the Vatican, the *Giovani* were also very wary of papal interventions in Venetian affairs. With the Counter-Reformation in full swing, the *Giovani* insisted that the state and not the church should have the ultimate jurisdiction over the social, moral, and even spiritual lives of Venetian citizens.[38] Venetian resistance to Rome's policy of centralization led to a series of conflicts, which reached a climax in 1606. A legal dispute between Venice and the Vatican escalated: Pope Paul V excommunicated the doge and the Senate, and placed the entire Venetian territory under an interdict, forbidding all public worship. Venice reacted by expelling the Jesuit

[37] Ibidem, 132 and, on the effect of the crisis of Cambrai, the essays included in Hale (ed.), *Renaissance Venice*.
[38] On the *Giovani*, who because of their anti-papal and anti-Habsburg attitude showed a marked sympathy for the Protestant states England and the Dutch Republic, see Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini*.

Order and forced the clergy to continue religious services. After a year of high tension, the pope had to back down and was forced to withdraw the interdict, which greatly damaged his prestige.[39]

After the Interdict Crisis, well-informed Protestant foreign diplomats hoped that Venice could be convinced to align itself with the Protestant cause politically, by joining the wars against the Habsburgs, and some even went so far as to think that the Republic could be persuaded to embrace the Reformed faith.[40] In 1609, the Protestant Republic of the United Provinces, which emerged from the revolt against Spain as an independent state, chose Venice as the destination for its first official ambassador, Cornelis van der Mijle. His mission was to formally communicate the newly signed truce with Spain to the doge and to sound out the possibilities for an alliance. Yet despite receiving Van der Mijle with all the ceremony befitting an ambassador of an independent state, the Venetian Republic was not willing to form an official political bond with the United Provinces at that time.[41]

In subsequent years, Venetian-Habsburg tension increased and escalated into the Uskok War (1616-1618). The conflict was provoked by the activities of the Uskok pirates, who were Christian refugees from Ottoman territories, stationed by the Habsburg rulers along their frontiers as part of their military border system. The pirates raided Venetian ships from harbours on the eastern Adriatic coast, within the domain of Ferdinand, Archduke of Styria and future Holy Roman Emperor. Ferdinand was unwilling to stop their attacks, but instead used the Uskoks to exert pressure on Venice in an attempt to hinder the Republic's ambitions in northeastern Italy. Ferdinand was aided by Spain, while Venice attracted Protestant assistance from, among others, the Dutch Republic. After the Uskok War, the bond between Venice and the United Provinces was further formalized in an alliance. Ambassador François van Aerssen visited Venice in 1620 to ratify a treaty, signed the year before in The Hague, which entailed mutual assistance if one of the two republics were to enter into war with the Habsburg powers.[42]

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[39] See on the Venetian Interdict, for example, Wright, "Why the Venetian Interdict?"; Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini*, 93-147.

[40] The English Ambassador Henry Wotton, who served three different diplomatic missions in Venice, was present during the Interdict and cherished hopes of introducing the Reformation. He ordered a large number of copies of the Book of Common Prayer, translated into Italian, which he wished to distribute among the Venetian population, Pearsall Smith (ed.), *The life and letters*, vol.I, 86 and Yates, "Paolo Sarpi's". Wotton's hopes of converting the Italian state, however, proved in vain, since the Venetian policy might have been anti-papal, but never anti-Catholic, Mackenney, "A plot", 199-201.

[41] Poelhekke, "De Heilige Stoel", 180-213.

[42] Rothenberg, "Venice and the Uskoks"; Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini*, 149-195. For the Venetian diplomats in the Dutch Republic and their role in the treaty, see Blok, *Relazioni veneziane*. The support would consist of financial assistance of 50,000 guilders (roughly 25,000 ducats) a month or its equivalent in ships and troops. When the war

Relations with the Habsburgs grew less strained during the second half of the seventeenth century, but in 1645 the Ottomans once again attacked Venetian colonies. Crete fell after a protracted siege which lasted until 1669. Fifteen years later, during the Wars of the Morea (1684-1699 and 1716-1718), the last great Venetian-Ottoman conflicts, Venice first reconquered and then lost possession of the Peloponnese again, which left the Republic at the start of the eighteenth century with just the Ionian Islands and the Dalmatian coast, only a fraction of its former empire.

Venetian commerce

In his *The merchants map of commerce*, first published in 1638, the English Levant trader Lewes Roberts aptly summed up the state of Venetian trade at that time:

> This city then hath for many years had the sole commerce and traffick of all the Mediterranean Seas, and not content therewith, have made that city the common mart of all the commodities of Arabia, Persia, India, and those eastern rich countreys by their great trade to Alexandria and Cairo, which continued for many years;(…) but the[n] Portugal finding the way to India by the Cape of Bona Speransa, and the English and Dutch merchants following those leaders now bring those rich commodities that way straight to their own homes, which in former times they were constrained to have from this city at a far dearer rate and at a second hand.[43]

Now, Roberts continued, Venetian trade languished, and Venetian sailors, once the glory of the Republic, had become lazy cowards and "the worst accounted in all those seas". Compared to the flourishing Venetian trade of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the changes were indeed considerable. At the height of its commercial power, Venice's trading network extended from

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between Spain and the United Provinces resumed in 1621, Venice initially supported the Dutch war effort, but the financial burden quickly became too much and payments lapsed. The main task of the Dutch ambassadors residing in Venice after 1621 was to remind the Venetian Republic of its obligations, but their efforts rarely met with much success, De Jong, *'Staat van oorlog'*, 327-332; Geyl, *Christofforo Suriano*, passim; De Jonge, *Nederland en Venetië*, 102-113.

[43] Roberts, *The merchants map of commerce*, 198-199.

Acre and Alexandria in the Levant to Bruges and London in western Europe.[44] By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Republic had lost its primacy in Levantine shipping, its role in the spice trade, and a large part of the overland export to Germany, traditionally the largest market for Venetian exports and re-exports.

Venice's position as intermediary depended on its domination of the Levantine routes, and the greatest threat was that others would directly trade with the Levant or the Far East. Due to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, Venice's control of the trade routes to the Near East had started to crumble, while increasing competition in the Mediterranean further complicated matters. The French developed their own trade relations with the Ottoman Empire following a commercial treaty between Francis I and Suleiman the Magnificent in 1536.[45] Subsequently the harbour of Marseille became an important competitor to Venice in the export from the Levant to Europe. Another rival port developed on the west coast of Italy: from the start of the seventeenth century, Livorno became the main port of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, replacing the silted-up port of Pisa. In Livorno, the Grand Duke Ferdinand I (1587-1609) tried to create the ideal port for foreign merchants by extending significant fiscal privileges. This new port-city became very attractive to non-Catholic merchants, because of the relatively liberal policies of Ferdinand I who was inclined to let commercial interests outweigh religious controversies.[46]

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the English entered the Levantine trade as well. The war over Cyprus (1570-1573) interrupted Venetian commercial activities and caused a series of bankruptcies among Venetian traders in London, while the sack of Antwerp in 1576 temporarily blocked the overland trade between the Adriatic and the North Sea. This was an incentive for the English to start their own trade with the eastern Mediterranean, which eventually led to the foundation of the Levant Company.[47] The French, English and, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Netherlanders seized a large part of the Ottoman market. Their ships

[44] Lane, *Venice*, 68-85, 119-134, 137-152. The round ships carrying bulk goods, such as salt and grain, to Venice were not subject to such strict planning as the galley journeys were.
[45] Sella, "Crisis and transformation", 90-91.
[46] On the development of Livorno and the rules pertaining to the settlement of Jewish and foreign merchants, see Frattarelli Fischer, *Le "Livornine"*, and on the leeway given to Protestants in Livorno, see Villani, "'Cum scandalo catholicorum'", 14.
[47] Ramsay, "The undoing", 37-38; Davis, "Influences", 186, 196-197; Davis, "England and the Mediterranean", 117. English trade with the Mediterranean culminated in the foundation of several chartered companies: first the Turkey Company (1581) and then the Venice Company (1583), which both merged into the Levant Company in 1592, Brenner, *Merchants and revolution*, 16ff; Wood, *A history of the Levant Company*. For the English in the Mediterranean, see also Pagano de Divitiis, *English merchants*.

were faster and safer than the Venetian vessels, while the cheaper northern European cloth met Ottoman demand.[48] Consequently Venice was losing a large part of its main markets by 1600.

Changes outside the Mediterranean also greatly influenced Venetian trade. The increasingly intensive exploitation of the ocean route by the English and Dutch East India Companies effectively rerouted the spice trade: not only did oriental commodities now reach the northern harbours directly, as Lewes Roberts described, but pepper and spices started to arrive in Venice from western Europe.[49] Another main pillar of Venetian trade had always been the export and re-export to southern Germany, but here the Venetians also suffered losses. The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) badly damaged German commercial centres and blocked trade routes, reducing Venetian-German trade to a trickle. Moreover, those Levantine goods that did reach Germany did so increasingly by French, English, and Netherlandish hands, and already in 1608 the Venetian silk weavers' guild complained that the Netherlanders, English, and French "go with their own vessels to the Levant to buy silks, spices, cotton, and other goods which they then bring to Marseille, the Netherlands and England, from where they are then transported to the fairs of Frankfurt and other places in Germany".[50]

All these setbacks did not mean the end of Venice as an economic centre. Although the city lost ground in international trade, in the sixteenth century it developed into one of the main manufacturing centres of Europe, producing glass, books, sugar, wax, and great quantities of silk and woollen cloth.[51] These products were mainly meant for export to the rest of Europe and the Levant, and one of the more positive effects of the expansion of the Ottoman Empire was that the spectacular growth in population and the wealth of the sultan's court turned Constantinople into an important market for Venetian merchandise.[52] The Venetian port still handled a significant

[48] Sella, *Commerci e industrie*, 26-34. Venetian shipping suffered relatively more from piracy than other nations, cf. Tenenti, *Naufrages*.
[49] Luzzato, "La decadenza", 174-175.
[50] "La perdita del Datio del Fonteco dei Todeschi si stima derivi dalla navigatione presa da fiamenghi, inglesi et francesi, perché vanno con li proprij loro vascelli in Levante a comprar sedde, speciarie, gottin et altre merci et quelle poi conducono a Marsilia, Fiandra et Inghilterra di dove sono poi condotte nelle fiere di Franco Forte et altri lochi d'Alemagna", ASV, Arte della Seta, b.109, fasc.203, 8 August 1608.
[51] Tucci, "Venezia nel Cinquecento", 67ff. Cloth production became one of the mainstays of Venetian industry, reaching its height in 1602 with a production of 28,792 pieces. After 1602, however, the production steadily declined to 14,778 pieces in 1622 and 12,976 pieces the following year, Sella, "The rise and fall", 110, 116-120. This decrease was caused by the deterioration of the transport services between Venice and the Levant, but the Venetian woollen industry suffered most from competition from the cheaper fabrics produced in England, the Netherlands, and, in the second half of the century, the Veneto.
[52] The population of Constantinople grew from less than 100,000 in 1453 to approximately 700,000 in 1580, Lane, *Venice*, 304.

amount of trade and shipping, and continued to maintain a high level of activity. Yet even though the annual revenues from the anchorage tax rose from 1591 onwards, this increase was largely caused by a rise in the number of non-Venetian ships in the lagoon.[53]

The growing share of foreign ships frequenting the Venetian harbour was a telling sign of the changing position of the city. With the reduction of Venice's commercial scope the international network of Venetian merchants also declined, leading to a decrease in contacts and access to commercial information.[54] In the mid-sixteenth century, Venetian merchants were present in all the important commercial centres of the Levant and western Europe. By the seventeenth century the number of Venetian merchants in the Levant started to dwindle, while their presence in the ports of western Europe declined even more sharply.[55] The patrician merchant involved in international maritime trade, once the symbol of Venetian commerce, became increasingly rare in seventeenth-century Venice as investments in land proved to be more attractive.[56] In 1610, the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia* had to conclude that there were no longer any Venetian merchants trading with western Europe and only a limited number with the Levant.[57]

The institution itself of the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia* at the start of the sixteenth century had been a response to the increasing difficulties confronting Venetian trade. This magistracy consisted of five members of the Senate, who could give a businessman's point of view, either from their own experience or from the experience of a father or brother, active in trade. The *Cinque Savi*, whose office was near the church of San Giacomo di Rialto, were charged with the task of advising the Senate on all matters concerning commerce and shipping. As Venice became more and more dependent on foreign ships and merchants, their tasks were extended to also include all matters involving immigrant traders.[58]

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[53] Foreign ships paid a higher amount of anchorage tax than Venetian ones, Lane, "The merchant marine", 150-153.
[54] Pezzolo, *Il fisco*, 188; Ramsay, "The undoing", 37.
[55] Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 24: in 1560, there were ten to twelve Venetian merchant houses in Constantinople, in 1612 only five.
[56] This did not mean the Venetian patricians completely abandoned business, but that maritime trade was replaced by commerce in products from their landed estates, Gullino, "I patrizi veneziani", 414-447.
[57] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r. 142, 5 July 1610.
[58] This magistracy was first established in 1507, and became permanent in 1517, Tiepolo (ed.), *Archivio di Stato di Venezia*, 980; Lane, *Venice*, 418. For a discussion of the *Giudici del Forestier*, which preceded the *Cinque Savi* as the institution with control over foreign merchants, Fusaro, "The English mercantile community"; Cessi, "La 'Curia Forinsecorum'".

Immigrant traders in Venice: Germans, Ottomans, and Jews

Venice, like every other early modern city, could maintain or increase the level of its population only by a steady stream of immigrants since death rates always exceeded birth rates.[59] As the capital of an extensive state and an economic and cultural centre, the city attracted many diplomats, international merchants, artists, and artisans as well as unskilled workers. Many came from the Terraferma and the Venetian possessions in the eastern Mediterranean, but also from other Italian states, the rest of Europe, and the Ottoman Empire. Venetian legislation was aimed at safeguarding the commercial interests of native traders and restricting the trade of immigrants: non-Venetian merchants were not allowed to use Venice as a transit-station for trade with the Levant. One way of gaining an equal legal and fiscal status as a Venetian-born merchant was through the acquisition of Venetian citizenship, but here the laws of Venice also constituted a formidable barrier. Citizenship *de intus et extra,* which allowed a foreigner to trade inside and outside the city of Venice with the same rights and privileges as a native Venetian, could be obtained after twenty-five years of continuous residence and payment of Venetian taxes, a prerequisite few foreigners could meet.[60] An alternative to attain a comparable, or at least a less unfavourable, position was for a group of immigrant merchants to acquire collective privileges. In Venice different communities of foreigners were legally recognized, which meant that they received communal rights which were regulated by law, and which also entailed certain restrictions and a level of government control. These regulations could relate to the immigrants' economic activities, places of residence or religious practice. The main formally recognized communities of foreign merchants in Venice were the Germans, Ottomans, and Sephardic Jews.

[59] The two articles by Fedalto, "Le minoranze straniere" and "Stranieri a Venezia", give an overview of immigrants in Venice. Many of the essays in Calabi and Lanaro (eds.), *La città italiana* explore the social networks and residential patterns of different groups of foreigners in medieval and early modern Venice, for example Braunstein, "Cannaregio"; Chauvard, "Scale di osservazione"; Moretti, "Gli Albanesi". For a discussion of the concept of stranger or 'forestiero' in historical analysis, see the introduction to Rossetti (ed.), *Dentro la città*, xii-xxvii.

[60] On foreigners obtaining Venetian citizenship, Bellavitis, "'Per cittadini metterete…'"; Molà and Mueller, "Essere straniero a Venezia". A difference in official status between native and foreign traders was not something exclusively Venetian, but nowhere else were requirements so demanding. For comparison, in Paris a stranger could acquire citizenship after one year and a day, see Bellavitis, *Identité*, 1. An exception to the rule was Amsterdam, where no distinctions between foreign and Amsterdam-born merchants existed and where citizenship, necessary to have access to the guilds, could be bought regardless of the duration of a foreigner's residence in the city, Gelderblom, "De economische en juridische positie", 172. On Netherlandish merchants in Venice applying for citizenship, see below, Chapter 5, 117-124.

South German traders, mostly from Augsburg, Regensburg, and Nuremberg, had been coming across the Alps to Venice since the Middle Ages.[61] Venetian laws forbade German merchants from shipping their wares, mostly metals, wool, fustian cloth, hides and leather, from Venice to the rest of the Mediterranean. In an effort to control Venetian-German commerce, the Republic compelled the German traders to reside in the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, the collegial exchange house located at the foot of Rialto bridge. The *Fondaco*, as a means to regulate the transactions of merchants from a specific region, was modelled on the *funduq*, the institution that combined the functions of warehouse, customs office, market, and inn for Christian traders in the Muslim world.[62] First constructed in 1228 and rebuilt after a fire in 1505, around 1580 it housed roughly a hundred Germans and the same number of servants and officials.[63]

All trade had to be conducted in the *Fondaco* through official brokers (*sensali*) and under the supervision of Venetian officials.[64] Yet the *Fondaco* was not just restrictive, but also facilitated trade. As compensation for the compulsory residence in the *Fondaco* and the brokerage fees they had to pay, the merchants obtained certain tax privileges and the exclusive right to trade between Venice and German lands, which meant that Venetian merchants were prohibited from trading with the German cities.[65] And there were other, more informal, benefits connected with this arrangement. The papal nuncio, reporting in 1580 on the inhabitants of the *Fondaco*, wrote: "They live as in a college, having everything in common, and they eat in the same place at a set hour, which proves very convenient for their business".[66] In this sense, the *Fondaco* formed an ideal commercial meeting place, providing easy access to mercantile information and facilitating business deals.

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[61] For the Germans in Venice, see Braunstein, "Venezia e la Germania"; Rösch, "Il Fondaco"; Luprian, *Il Fondaco dei Tedeschi*; Braunstein, "Remarques sur la population allemande"; Dazzi and Brunetti, *Il Fondaco*; Simonsfeld, *Der Fondaco*.

[62] On the Venetian *fondaci* and their prototypes in the Islamic world, Constable, *Housing the stranger*, esp. 315-328 for the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*; Howard, *Venice and the East*, 120-131; Concina, *Fondaci*.

[63] Report of the papal nuncio Alberto Bolognetti in Venice, partially included in Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 330.

[64] Luprian, *Il Fondaco dei Tedeschi*; Rösch, "Il Fondaco", 67: Only those traders who were living with their wives in Venice could reside outside the *Fondaco*.

[65] Mueller, "'Veneti facti privilegio'", 47. Regulations for the *Fondaco* from 1475 can be found in Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 328 and Thomas (ed.)., *Capitolare dei visdomini del Fontego dei Todeschi*.

[66] Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 330. The nuncio's words were echoed by an English traveller in 1645, who described that the German merchants in the *Fondaco* lived and ate "as in a Coledge", Evelyn, *The diary of John Evelyn*, 222.

The Venetians adopted a similar solution, albeit with a stronger element of segregation, for the Ottoman merchants. Traders from regions under Ottoman rule had been present in Venice since at least the beginning of the sixteenth century and, as part of an understanding with the sultan, were the only foreigners allowed to conduct commerce between Venetian and Ottoman territories. As Ottoman military pressure on Venetian possessions in the eastern Mediterranean increased and political relations between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman empire became more strained, plans were formed to oblige all Ottoman traders to live in a single building. The merchants themselves supported the idea because it would give them greater security in a potentially hostile state.[67] The *Fondaco dei Turchi* was eventually founded in 1621. The Ottomans were subject to a curfew, and their *Fondaco* was shielded by high walls from neighbouring houses and permanently guarded in an attempt not just to control their commercial activities, but also to restrict contact between Christians and the Muslim traders.[68]

The relationship between the Republic and another sizeable group of non-Venetian traders, the Jewish merchants, was characterized by privileges inspired by economic considerations, but most of all by even more clearly defined restrictions. Jews had only been allowed to settle in Venice in 1509, when they arrived along with other refugees fleeing the armies of the League of Cambrai, but the Venetians maintained a strong ambivalence toward their permanent residence.[69] The Jews living in Venice formed a multi-ethnic community, consisting of three different groups or nations, each with distinct economic activities. The Germanic-Italian Jews were mainly pawnbrokers and traders in second-hand goods, while many 'Ponentine' (Iberian) and Levantine Jews (Sephardic Jews who were subject to the Ottoman sultan) were international merchants. From 1516 onwards all Jews in Venice had to live in the ghetto, a segregated residential area separated from the neighbouring houses of Christian inhabitants by high walls and a surrounding canal. The entrance gate to the ghetto was guarded and between sunset and sunrise Jewish residents were cut off from the rest of the city. Rules and regulations pertaining to their settlement, economic activities, and religious practices were recorded in special collective charters, called *condotte*. These charters specified in minute detail

[67] Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 327.
[68] Constable, *Housing the stranger*, 331; Concina, *Fondaci*, 239; Sagredo, *Fondaco dei Turchi*. See the house rules for the *Fondaco dei Turchi* included in Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 350-352.
[69] The literature on the Jews in early modern Venice is extensive. Recent contributions addressing the position of the Jews in early modern Venice are the essays included in Ravid (ed.), *Studies* and in Davis and Ravid (eds.), *The Jews*. Arbel, *Trading nations* discusses Venice's attitude to Jewish merchants operating as the link with the Ottoman world.

the terms under which Jews were allowed to settle in Venice, and had to be renegotiated every five or ten years.[70]

In 1589 the Levantine and Ponentine Jews requested the right to permanently settle in Venice and be allowed to trade with the Ottoman territories under the same conditions as Venetian citizens. The Venetian Senate agreed to the proposal, hoping to increase the level of trade, and granted this privilege in a new ten-year charter. The Ponentines and Levantines were also granted a certain level of self-government, as well as the freedom to practise their religion and a limited guarantee of protection from persecution by the Inquisition. However, like all other Jewish inhabitants of the city, they had to reside in the ghetto, comply with the curfew, and wear coloured hats as recognizable signs of their Jewish identity.[71]

The settlement and commercial license of each of these groups of foreign merchants were regulated by specific Venetian laws, but the nature and levels of restrictions to which they were subject differed. The *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* was a medieval institution developed by the Venetians to control the vital north-south trade routes over land, through which they distributed a large part of the pepper and spices imported from the Levant. In the case of the Ottoman and Jewish merchants, the fact that they were not Christian had greater weight in determining the degree of control than did their provenance. But even the Jewish merchants, whose presence was most strictly guarded, succeeded in obtaining more liberal trading concessions, showing that the room for manoeuvre was not exclusively determined by the authorities, but that the immigrant traders themselves could, up to a certain extent, influence their own position.

Whatever the city's reputation for political stability may have been, around 1600 Venice was experiencing considerable changes. It was still one of the largest and richest cities in Europe and its location at the northern end of the Adriatic Sea allowed it to link the trade flows of the eastern Mediterranean to those of northern Italy, and central and northern Europe. Traces of its maritime power and its trade monopoly were still visible in its harbour, tangible in the wealth of its inhabitants, and present in its attitude and laws towards foreign merchants. Yet Venetian territorial power suffered serious blows during the sixteenth century, while the *Stato da Mar* was

[70] On the charters, see Ravid, "An introduction to the charters". For the intensive relations between Portuguese New Christian and Jewish merchants in Venice, see Ruspio, "La presenza portoghese".
[71] The petition presented by Daniel Rodriga, the consul of the Levantine Jews, in 1589 is partially included in Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 346-349.

slowly giving way under Ottoman pressure. Venice no longer was the exclusive hinge between East and West, and as the *Serenissima* lost ground, it became increasingly dependent on those northern European traders that challenged its commercial hegemony. The merchants from the Low Countries had to find their way and negotiate their position in a city that was trying to come to terms with dramatic, compounded changes.

Chapter 2. Unlocking the Venetian market: changing trade relations in the 1590s

Trade between Venice and the Low Countries before the 1590s

Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries the trade relations connecting Venice and the Low Countries underwent many transformations and the relative importance of maritime and continental routes fluctuated continually. Venice had instituted regular shipping and trade with northern Europe from the beginning of the fourteenth century, when an annual convoy of Venetian galleys was sent to Bruges and London.[1] This regular galley route was organized by the Venetian state and was closely interlinked with the galleys bringing goods such as spices, silk, cotton, raisins, and saffron from the Levant to Venice. The return cargo usually consisted of English wool, woollen and linen textiles produced in the Low Countries, and amber and furs bought from the Hanseatic merchants in Bruges.

In the middle of the fourteenth century both the Hundred Years' War and the conflicts between Venice and its main Italian rival Genoa caused the galley journeys to be interrupted, resulting in a temporary preference for the transcontinental routes via the Brenner pass and the Rhine valley. By 1374 the official Venetian galley fleet set sail again for Flanders, while in the meantime privately owned ships had also started to make the trip northward.[2] In the second half of the fifteenth century, however, things began to change. When civil war broke out in the Habsburg Netherlands in the years 1477-1492, commerce in Bruges suffered and Antwerp developed into the leading centre of trade in the Netherlands. Venice now redirected its galleys to Antwerp, but their presence there was only short-lived.[3] Antwerp developed into the main entrepôt for pepper and spices imported from Asia by the Portuguese, leaving little room on the market for the Venetians.[4]

After the galley route to the Netherlands fell into disuse, trade between Venice and Antwerp was primarily conducted via Germany. Viewed from Antwerp, the main continental route was the one following the Rhine, going south via Cologne and Frankfurt am Main to

[1] In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, before the sea route had become a permanent part of Italian trade with northern Europe, commercial contacts took place through the system of fairs in central France, Stabel, "Italian merchants", 31-32. Lane's *Venice*, 45-85 describes the development of the Venetian galley system.
[2] As Venice extended its territory on the Italian mainland, the routes over the Alps became a more secure alternative, Lane, *Venice*, 127.
[3] See Tucci, "Costi e ricavi", for an analysis of a Venetian galley's voyage to Antwerp in 1504.
[4] Lane, *Venice*, 350-351.

Nuremberg or Augsburg, and then on to Venice (Map 2.1). With the intensification of overland commerce, transport professionalized, and specialized firms started to carry merchandise at standard costs through Germany and over the Alps in convoys of twenty-five or more large freight carts, the so-called *Hessenwagens*.[5] The Cleinhans firm, for example, was one of the main expeditors in the first half of the sixteenth century. Established in Reutte, a small village at the foot of the Alps, it specialized in the route between Augsburg and Venice, and mainly conducted trade for Antwerp merchants, who increasingly participated in commerce with Italy.[6]

The Antwerp registers of the Hundredth Penny Tax, a one per cent export tax levied on all goods leaving the Low Countries between spring 1543 and the end of 1545, show that 29.3 per cent of the city's entire continental trade was destined for Venice.[7] Yet in these years no Venetians are recorded as exporters, since the decline of the galley trade had marginalized their presence in Antwerp.[8] Other Italian exporters preferred to send their goods to Ancona, which allowed them to transport their wares to the Levant without being hindered by the export restrictions applicable to non-Venetian traders in Venice. In contrast with the Italians, Netherlandish traders based in Antwerp showed a clear preference for sending their goods to Venice, indicating that at this time they were less interested in trade with the Levant. Most of these traders employed their own agents or settled in Venice themselves.[9]

One of the most important firms engaged in Antwerp-Venetian trade at that time was the De Hane company, run from Venice by Maarten de Hane (1475-1556). This firm serves as a good starting point to describe early sixteenth-century commercial relations and the way these relations evolved. De Hane, originally from Brussels, had moved to Venice at the beginning of the sixteenth century and traded mainly in textiles, exporting silk thread from Venice to Antwerp and London, and importing kerseys, says, woollen cloth and such fabrics as Haarlem cloth and

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[5] Brulez, "L'exportation des Pays-Bas", 466-469. For a recent discussion of sixteenth-century Antwerp-German trade, Harreld, *High Germans*, esp. 119-127. On the development of Antwerp trade in general, Van der Wee, "Trade"; Van der Wee, *The growth of the Antwerp market*.

[6] Brulez, *De firma Della Faille*, 410-415. Ideally, a journey between Venice and Antwerp could take seventy to eighty days, though it often took as much as three to five months.

[7] Ibidem, 465-498; Brulez, "L'exportation des Pays-Bas", 475. Only Ancona received more goods (34.9 per cent) than Venice.

[8] Stabel, "Italian merchants", 131-159.

[9] Among the 77 traders who exported goods for over 1,000 pound Flemish to Italy in 1543-1545, fifteen were Netherlanders. For example, Jan della Faille ranked third among the most important exporters, sending merchandise valued at 20,971 pound Flemish; Jan Mannaert exported goods valued at 19,787 pound Flemish; Jacques and Balthasar de Cordes exported for a value of 12,678 and 3,103 pound Flemish, respectively; and Balthasar Charles for 1,056 pound Flemish, Brulez, *De firma Della Faille*, 467-469, 474.

satin from Valenciennes.[10] Business was good for De Hane, whose name was Italianized to D'Anna, and around 1535 he took up residence in a *palazzo* on the Canal Grande. Maarten became an important patron of the arts: he commissioned the painter Pordenone to decorate his *palazzo*'s façade, and his sons and grandsons, who took over the firm after his death, became patrons of Titian and Veronese.[11]

In 1539, De Hane delegated his affairs in Antwerp to his representative and son-in-law Jan della Faille (1515-1582), whom he had employed as his assistant in Venice since 1530. But Della Faille proved to be untrustworthy and quickly started trading between Venice and Antwerp independently, developing into a formidable competitor of his father-in-law.[12] As the registers of the Hundredth Penny Tax show, Jan della Faille, trading partly for De Hane and partly for his own account, had become the most important Netherlandish exporter to Italy in the 1540s, and his family firm flourished over the next five decades. His main line of business was the export of English kerseys and linen from the Netherlands to the Mediterranean, and importing raw silk, silk cloths, and mirrors from Venice. The headquarters of the firm remained in Antwerp, managed after Jan's death by his son Maarten (1545-1620), while family members were employed as the firm's agents in London and Venice. Anton van Neste operated the Venetian branch between 1574 and 1578, after whuch he was succeeded as the Della Failles' agent by Jan de Wale. Jan della Faille's grandson Jan-Karel took over from De Wale in 1592.[13]

With Maarten della Faille at the helm in the 1580s, substantial changes were made to the activities of the firm, which now also became active in maritime commerce with Italy. This new line of business was a direct consequence of Maarten's experiences in London as an agent for his father's firm between 1575 and 1582, right at the time when the English were presented with the

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[10] Ibidem, 3-14. Daniel van der Molen (?-1554), son-in-law of Maarten de Hane, was another merchant working in Venice in the first half of the sixteenth century, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, xx-xxi.

[11] The *palazzo* had been constructed in 1528 for the Talenti family who sold it to De Hane after they had run into financial troubles. For the decorations made by Pordenone, De Maria, "The patron for Pordenone's frescoes"; Limentani Virdis, "La famiglia d'Anna a Venezia". Maarten was granted the *cittadinanza ordinaria* in 1545, De Maria, "The merchants of Venice", 56. This type of citizenship was granted to those who had made significant contributions to the Republic, and is not to be confused with the *cittadinanza de intus et extra*, for which specific residency requirements needed to be met.

[12] On the Della Faille's business, see the extensive study based on the firm's archives of Brulez, *De firma Della Faille*.

[13] After 1578, Van Neste continued working in Venice for Jan della Faille's brother Jacob. For the Della Faille's Venetian branch, Ibidem, 38-39, 279-283. Anton van Neste and Jan de Wale were both nephews of Jan della Faille: Van Neste was the son of Della Faille's sister Catharina and De Wale of his sister Johanna. After 1592, De Wale moved to Amsterdam. See for the intricate family relations between the Della Failles and their business partners/agents the genealogies in Ibidem, xxiii-xxv and Jongbloet-Van Houtte, *Brieven*, 281-284.

opportunity to take up maritime trade with the Mediterranean themselves. The English example inspired Maarten della Faille, and after moving back to Antwerp, he sent one ship, usually from England, to Venice each year between 1582 and 1588. The first shipments show the experimental nature of this enterprise. Along with large quantities of English wool, which Della Faille also sent via the continental routes, the ships contained copper, salmon, and sheepskins. Maarten's agents soon reported back that copper did not sell in Venice and that the price for salmon was too low, but that the sheepskins did well. Return cargoes consisted of currants, gallnuts, rice, mirrors, and some spices. After 1588, Maarten suspended these shipments. The previous journeys had produced lower profits than he had hoped for, dangers at sea had increased due to the ongoing wars, and more importantly, after 1585, the forces of the rebellious northern provinces obstructed all Antwerp maritime trade.[14] Della Faille's initiative shows, however, that even before Netherlandish seaborne trade with Italy became a regular and large-scale phenomenon in the 1590s, Antwerp merchants already involved in continental commerce had explored the possibilities of sending ships southward.

Antwerp's commercial community was hit hard by the political and religious crisis that affected the Netherlands during the second half of the sixteenth century, and the insecurities and violence drove many inhabitants from the town. A first wave of migration occurred when, in reaction to the iconoclastic violence of 1566, Philip II sent the Duke of Alva to the Low Countries to restore order. Alva instigated a harsh persecution of dissenters, and many Protestants fled to England and Germany. In 1585 a veritable exodus took place when, after a long siege, Antwerp capitulated to the Spanish army. The Duke of Parma ordered those Protestants who refused to reconvert to Catholicism to sell their belongings and leave the city within five years. In response to the Spanish capture of the town, the rebel forces of William of Orange blockaded the Flemish coast and the river Scheldt, leading to the collapse of Antwerp trade and depriving a large part of the city's inhabitants of their income.

Religious and economic motives forced many to abandon their homes temporarily or permanently, resulting in a dramatic collapse of Antwerp's population: in the 1560s the city had

[14] Brulez, *De firma Della Faille*, 125-136. Jan de Wale reported in December 1585 that because of the difficult and dangerous times it would be wiser to concentrate on continental instead of maritime trade. Another reason for interrupting the voyages was that in 1586, the Della Faille firm lost its licence to export wool from England, which had formed the bulk of the shipments.

had 90-100,000 inhabitants, but by 1589 no more than 42,000 remained.[15] Among the migrants were many traders who went to German cities and, increasingly, to Amsterdam, which at that time was developing into the leading trade centre in the Low Countries. The number of refugees leaving the southern provinces for the Northern Netherlands may well have amounted to over 100,000.[16] The diaspora had a disastrous effect on Antwerp, but at the same time it reinforced and expanded already existing international trading networks. Many of the migrants relocated their businesses while remaining in contact with family members and business relations in other commercial centres, establishing a far-ranging network of interconnected firms of Netherlandish origin all over Europe.[17]

Maarten della Faille's brother Jacques was one of those who fled to the province of Holland, where he became one of the pioneers in the earliest commercial maritime voyages from the northern provinces to Italy. His first attempt came in 1584, when he sent a ship loaded with kerseys, salted fish, and herring. Even though the result of the expedition proved disappointing, Jacques tried again five years later.[18] He and his business partners took the extra precaution of sending an agent, Jan Bukentop, over land to Italy to coordinate the arrival of the ship and to look for suitable return cargo. In Venice, Bukentop could rely on the existing contacts of the Della Faille family. Three of their agents, the experienced Cornelio Hoons, Jan de Wale, and Francesco Vrins, would handle the buying and selling of the goods. Bukentop was instructed to carefully supervise all transactions with Italians personally and was warned that: "Sicilians are bad people and should be watched carefully (…). All one sells to them has to be paid for in cash. (…) In

[15] On the migration and economic disruption caused by the Revolt, Lesger, *The rise of the Amsterdam market*, 107-138.

[16] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 308. Briels gives a high estimate of approximately 150,000 immigrants moving to the Dutch Republic, Briels, *Zuid-Nederlanders*, 103-228; Briels, "De Zuidnederlandse immigratie". Cf. Van Houtte, "Het economisch verval", 192-193, who arrives at an estimated 80,000.

[17] Brulez, "De diaspora", passim; Lesger, *The rise of the Amsterdam market*, 156-160. For the different patterns of Netherlandish settlements in German towns, see Schilling, "Innovation through migration"; Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten*. Recent work examining the contribution of Antwerp merchants to the rise of Amsterdam is Gelderblom, "From Antwerp to Amsterdam"; Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*. Cf. Lesger, *The rise of the Amsterdam market*, esp. Chapter 4.

[18] The other participants in this voyage were the merchants Daniel van der Meulen (1554-1600) who was Della Faille's brother-in-law, Hans de Laet, and Jacques Coquil, Sneller, "De drie cargasoenen", 92-104; Kernkamp and Klaassen-Meijer, "De rekeningen"; Jongbloet-Van Houtte, *Brieven*, xlvii-lv. To limit the risks of arrest by either the English or Spanish navies that patrolled the seas, the ship 'Den Swerte Ruijter' (The Black Rider) was given an alternative name, while the shipmaster was equipped with English passes and documents from the neutral harbour Emden. On the Spanish embargoes against Dutch shipping and trade, see Israel, *Dutch primacy*, passim. Cf. Lopez Martin, "Embargo and protectionist policies".

Genoa they also have little conscience. So you must never trust or believe anybody too much".[19] When the ship returned to Amsterdam in April 1590, Jacques della Faille and his partners made just a small profit. More importantly, however, their ship must have brought the news that Italy was facing serious food shortages, information that would drastically change Netherlandish commerce with this region.

In desperate need of cereals

The *cittadino* Marco Ottobon left Venice for Danzig in November 1590 spurred by the thought of the empty stomachs of his compatriots.[20] Venice continually required a large and steady supply of grain for its inhabitants and as provision for its navy, but that year its grain stocks were running dangerously low.[21] Previously the territories of the Ottoman Empire had been one of Venice's main suppliers of grain, but in the sixteenth century the growing demand of the expanding city of Constantinople and the deterioration of Venetian-Ottoman relations made it exceedingly difficult to import Ottoman cereals. The regions Sicily and Apulia now formed the main sources of grain, while the cereal production on the Venetian mainland was also becoming increasingly important.[22] Hence, by the end of the sixteenth century, Venice had come to rely on a narrowing base of cereal suppliers located within Italy, which increased the city's vulnerability to food shortages caused by crop failures.

Harvests in the Mediterranean were generally unpredictable and yields were relatively low, but in the 1590s the whole region suffered a spell of particularly bad weather. In 1590, it rained relentlessly during the months March, April, and May, and in an attempt to persuade God to improve the weather the Venetians organized many processions. The weather did change, so

[19] "Cecilianen is boos volck, soo moet wel toesien (…) Al wat men aen dat volck vercoopt, dat most contant wesen. (…) Tot Genua hebben se mede cleyne conscientie. Soo moocht nyemant te vele betrouwen noch gelooven", cited by Sneller, "De drie cargasoenen", 95. Warnings against the untrustworthiness of Italians were a common theme in the treatises and guides written for early modern Netherlandish travellers, Frank-Van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*, 49-61.

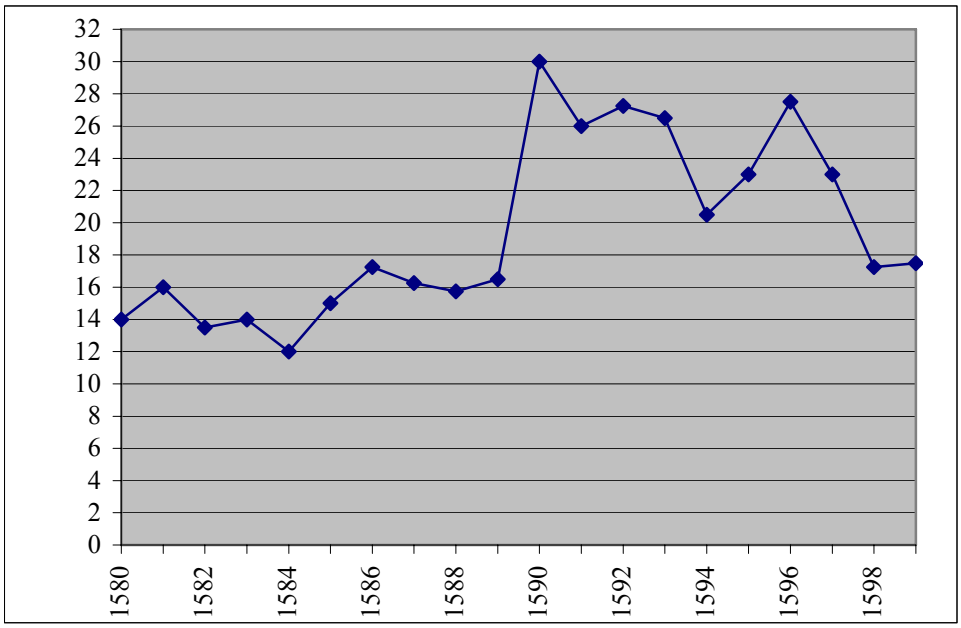
[20] See, for his letters to the Venetian Grain Office, ASV, Secreta, Archivi propri Polonia, r.2-3. Marco Ottobon conducted twenty-six different missions in the service of the Venetian Republic, Davis, *The decline*, 112. On the position of the Ottobon family in Venice, Menniti-Ippolito, *Fortuna*.

[21] Considering an annual consumption of 4 *staio* of grain (the Venetian measure *staio* being 83.3 litre) for the more well-to-do and 3 *staio* for the majority of the inhabitants of Venice, approximately 384,000 *staio* grain was being consumed annually by Venice in the middle of the seventeenth century, when the population numbered around 120,000, Mattozzi et al., "Il politico e il pane", 280-281.

[22] Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé*, 42-53, 150.

much so that not a drop of rain fell in the months of July, August, and September, with disastrous consequences for the harvest.[23] In the whole of Italy, where an increasing population already strained agricultural resources, the subsequent grain shortages developed into severe famines.[24] In December 1589 one *staio* of wheat had cost 16 lire in Venice; between March and April 1591 prices peaked at 50 lire.[25] Yet even with grain prices rising steeply (Fig. 2.1), hardly any cereals were offered on the Venetian market.

Figure 2.1 Annual average grain prices in Venice in lire, 1580-1599



Based on: Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé*, 110.

[23] Marciana, Mss. It., VII, 755 (8235), c.198. This anonymous chronicle covers a period from 1567 until the early 1590s, and registers natural disasters and other events in Venice and the Terraferma. It describes the grain scarcities and rising grain prices in great detail, and was written by a well-informed member of the patriciate. See c.201, where the author states that he was *capitano* at Padua in 1591. The *capitano* was one of the two Venetian patrician supervisors governing Padua, in charge of military affairs and finance. Most likely the chronicle's author is Federico Sanudo, who held this position in 1591, see *Podestaria e capitanato*, LIV.

[24] Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. I, 418-427. On the impact of the changing climatic conditions, known as 'the Little Ice Age', and Italian demographic growth, Malanima, *L'economia*, 343-345. For Italy, this decade signalled the start of the crisis of the seventeenth century, a period of demographic, economic, and industrial stagnation. See, for the impact of the crisis of the 1590s from an European perspective, the collection of essays in Clark (ed.), *The European crisis*, especially Davidson, "Northern Italy" and Noordegraaf, "Dearth, famine and social policy", 78-79. The latter states that the food shortages in the Mediterranean and subsequent grain trade contributed to the prosperity of the Dutch Republic during the first half of the seventeenth century.

[25] In the period 1590-1599, grain prices averaged twice what they had averaged a decade earlier, Marciana, Mss. It., VII, 755 (8235), c.199; Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé*, 110-111.

As the Venetian government was well aware, rising grain prices meant that the risk of civil unrest increased. For example, during food shortages in 1569-1570 Venetian bakeries had been robbed and the Venetian people became quite hostile towards the government. In May 1570, at the death of Pietro Loredan, the doge who had tried to counter hunger by having bread made of millet, people were heard singing "Rejoice, rejoice! The doge is dead, who gave us millet in our bread" and "Long live our saints and lords of noble birth; dead is the doge who brought upon us dearth!".[26] Several decades later, in 1628, when grain again was scarce and prices started rising, the ambassador of the United Provinces reported to The Hague that the *popolo* in the street had shouted to the doge that he was to lower the price of cereals or else drop dead.[27]

The agricultural crisis and the threat of disorder at the end of the sixteenth century led to a greater involvement of the authorities in the regulation of food supplies throughout the entire Italian peninsula.[28] The institution responsible for the provisioning of Venice was the *Officio alle Biave* (Grain Office) which was directly accountable to the Senate. All imported grain needed to be registered at the *Officio* and had to be sold through the city's warehouses at San Marco and Rialto. The *Officio* was also in charge of the *calmiere,* the system regulating the weight and price of bread.[29] To alleviate the scarcity in the early 1590s, the Senate and the *Officio* increased pressure on the Terraferma to provide the city with more grain, but with very little result.[30] The only alternative was to import cereals from regions further away, accepting the high costs involved in the long-distance transport of grain, a bulk product.

In an attempt to take the importation of cereals into their own hands, the Senate had sent Marco Ottobon northward in the autumn of 1590. Yet his mission was characterized from the start by his lack of experience in the northern European grain trade, while it was further hindered by the absence of Venetian merchants who could offer him assistance. First Ottobon tried his luck in Vienna, but there was very little grain to be had, and transportation over the Alps to

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[26] "Et otto, l'è morto il dose del meiotto!" and "Viva San Marco, con la Signoria, che è morto il dose della carestia". The translations are from Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 112-113.

[27] NA The Hague, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.03, Resoluties, no.53, 11 November 1628: "dat de gemeente den hertooch gaende langes straet heeft nae geroupen dat hy het coorn in prys soude doen affslaen oft dat hy mocht borsten". Maarten Hell kindly supplied me with this information.

[28] Davidson, "Northern Italy", 170-171.

[29] Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé*, 74-78: the *Officio* consisted among others of *ufficiali*, officials controlling the grain distribution, *provveditori* (patrician officials) supervising the *ufficiali* and the city's granaries, and *sopraprovveditori* who controlled the supply of grain by private merchants. On the *calmiere,* Mattozzi, "Il politico e il pane"; Mattozzi et al., "Il politico e il pane".

[30] Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.26r-32v, 1 February 1590 (m.v.) and 12 June 1591: anybody on the Terraferma possessing more than 10 *staio* grain had to consign it to the *Officio*.

Venice proved to be far too costly.[31] Continuing his journey northward, at the beginning of December 1590 he reached Danzig, one of the main ports exporting cereals produced in the regions around the Baltic Sea and in the Polish hinterland.[32] Unfortunately Ottobon arrived too late, when winter had already set in and the harbour had frozen. To make matters worse, rumours of his mandate to buy large quantities of grain had preceded his arrival, causing prices to rise dramatically. The Venetian representative was left with no option other than to wait out the winter in the hope that prices would fall.[33]

Three months earlier, Riccardo Riccardi, agent of Grand Duke Ferdinand I of Tuscany, had arrived in Danzig as well, but he had gone about business in a different, more efficient, way. Riccardi could rely on a network of Tuscan commercial contacts with merchants in northern Europe, which increased his chances at success.[34] Immediately after his arrival, he started to charter ships and buy grain in great secrecy, and he was able to send ten ships southward within just a few weeks. The first ship reached the harbour of Livorno in December 1590, making Ferdinand I the first Italian ruler to import grain directly from the Baltic.[35] Ottobon, on the other hand, had to spend the entire winter in Danzig - much to his displeasure - collecting information, reporting back to Venice, and awaiting further orders. He informed the *Officio* that Danzig was a good option in times of need, with a serviceable harbour and access to Polish grain. June and July would be the months to do business there, so that the grain could be sent to Venice in autumn, before the cold set in.[36] He also reported that freight prices were high, since seafarers were unfamiliar with the route to Venice and were afraid of being captured by Ottoman galleys. More important perhaps, ship-owners doubted the availability of cargoes in Italy and therefore insisted that the Venetians pay for return voyages as far as the west coast of Spain, where the Danzigers had commercial contacts and could be certain of a return cargo. Ottobon also had difficulties

[31] ASV, Secreta, Archivi propri Polonia, r.2-3, c.4r-7r.
[32] See, on Danzig's role as export centre in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bogucka, *Baltic commerce*.
[33] Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.167, "Relation e lettere de Paesi Bassi", c.2. On the effect of the Italian demand on Danzig grain prices, Abel, *Hausse und Krisis*, 19-20.
[34] On Tuscan merchants in northern Europe, see Mazzei, *Traffici*. Ottobon describes the Tuscan competition he faced in ASV, Secreta, Archivi propri Polonia, r.2-3, c.15v-16v.
[35] Ferdinand's aim was twofold: he imported enough grain to stabilize Tuscan grain prices so as to prevent social upheaval, but he also made sure that the prices were high enough to make a substantial profit. At the same time, he also sold the grain outside his territory, to cities such as Palermo, Messina, and Venice, Pagano de Divitiis, "Grano", 168, 175; Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé*, 156-157, 163.
[36] Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.167, "Relation e lettere de Paesi Bassi", c.28v-30v. On his stay in Danzig, also Samsonowicz, "Relations commerciales"; Brunetti, "Tre ambasciate annonarie", 110ff.

making payments, due to the lack of credit relations between Danzig and Venice. Finally, in October 1591, he was able to send five ships with wheat and rye to Venice. [37]

In the end Ottobon's mission was a relative success: three of the five ships eventually arrived in Venice in the spring of 1592.[38] The *Officio* was satisfied with the quality of the grain from Danzig, but after considering the difficulties Ottobon had encountered, they refrained from sending another representative to the Baltic. Ottobon reported that, all in all, Amsterdam was a more suitable port for buying Baltic grain: freight costs might be slightly higher, but ships, crews, grain, and credit were easier to come by, and the voyage would be significantly shorter.[39] Since the late Middle Ages, the Netherlands had needed to import cereals from other areas to feed its own inhabitants, and the Baltic Sea region eventually became its most important supplier of cereals.[40] Between the 1530s and 1550s, Amsterdam developed into the main grain market in the Low Countries, because the city offered a number of advantages: an excellent system of waterways ensured that grain could be easily distributed to the Netherlandish hinterland, while the town also provided good access to vital information on grain prices and the quality of cereal in the Baltic region.[41] Another important factor, also noted by Ottobon, was the abundance of transport possibilities. The merchant fleet of Holland had expanded during the sixteenth century, becoming the largest in Europe.[42]

Although the import of grain at first had been mainly organized to feed the Netherlandish population, after the second quarter of the sixteenth century, re-export to other countries, such as Spain, Portugal, and France grew in importance. The authorities in Holland actively stimulated this re-export by introducing attractive fiscal privileges, which meant that in Amsterdam, grain was exempted from the so-called *congégeld*, an export levy. The Baltic grain trade duly expanded and in the 1570s, ships from Holland transported enough grain through the Sound to feed at least 440,000 people, at a time when the combined population of the largest cities in that province

[37] ASV, Secreta, Archivi propri Polonia, r.2-3, c.9r, 13v; Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.167, "Relation e lettere de Paesi Bassi", c.30v. The ships were laden with a total of 334 *last* rye and 270 *last* wheat (one *last* of grain corresponded to approximately 2,000 kilo).
[38] One ship had sunk and another one had to sell the grain in Lisbon, because its cargo started to heat up and the quality plummeted, ASV, Secreta, Archivi propri Polonia, r.2-3, c.127r-127v.
[39] ASV, Secreta, Archivi propri Polonia , r.2-3, c.55r-55v.
[40] On agriculture in the Netherlands, De Vries and Van der Woude, *The first modern economy*, 195-234.
[41] Van Tielhof, *De Hollandse graanhandel*, 129-150 on Amsterdam as a centre of commercial information. See also Chapter 6 in Lesger, *The rise of the Amsterdam market*.
[42] De Vries and Van der Woude, *The first modern economy*, 358: by 1565 it numbered roughly 700 vessels.

(Amsterdam, Haarlem, Gouda, Leiden, Delft, and Dordrecht) amounted to approximately 100,000.[43]

In the early 1590s, Netherlandish ships carrying Baltic grain first started to reach the Mediterranean. Whereas the voyages to Italy of the Della Faille brothers in the 1580s been small-scale and tentative ventures, the massive influx in the next decade permanently changed the nature of Netherlandish-Italian commercial contacts. Shipmasters and merchants gained more confidence as knowledge of the shipping routes increased and was made available through such cartographical works as Willem Barentsz' *Nieuwe beschryvinghe ende caertboeck van de Midlandtsche Zee*, the first seafarer's guide to the Mediterranean published in Amsterdam in 1595 (Ill. 2.1).[44] In the beginning of the *Straatvaart*, ships sailing to Italy loaded at Amsterdam, but after a while direct voyages from the Baltic to Italy became routine and vessels made longer and more complex voyages in the Mediterranean.[45] Unfamiliarity with the new trade was not the only obstacle to overcome: journeys to the Mediterranean were also particularly unsafe because vessels from the Northern Netherlands ran the risk of being captured by Spain. In 1585, as part of his economic warfare against the rebellious provinces, Philip II imposed a general embargo on their shipping and trade with Spanish territory, making the passage through the Strait of Gibraltar especially dangerous.[46] Despite these difficulties, however, large fleets carrying cereals sailed through the Straits to supply the Italian cities in the years of food shortages, and in the first fifteen years of the *Straatvaart* nearly four hundred ships sailed from Amsterdam to Italy.[47] A few years

[43] Van Tielhof, *De Hollandse graanhandel*, 151-168, 229.
[44] Davids, *Zeewezen en wetenschap*, 98.
[45] For the start of the *Straatvaart*, Van Royen, "The first phase"; Hart, "De Italië-vaart"; Kernkamp, "Scheepvaart- en handelsbetrekkingen"; Kernkamp, "Het begin". Cf. Lopez Martin, "A century".
[46] Food shortages in the Spanish territories of Lombardy and the Kingdom of Naples induced Philip II to temporarily lift the embargo in 1591, but nonetheless the first fleet of twenty-six ships, which had set sail from Hoorn and Amsterdam for the Mediterranean, was arrested that year by the Spanish on its return journey, Kirk, "Genoa and Livorno", 7; Israel, *Dutch primacy*, 17, 31, 56-60, 124-125. In 1598, Philip III again imposed a general embargo which lasted until 1609, the start of the Twelve Years' Truce. By the end of the Truce, the economic conflict erupted again with a ban on Dutch trade and shipping throughout the Iberian peninsula and Spanish Southern Italy, which lasted until 1647.
[47] Van Royen, "The first phase", 87. Van Royen arrives at a total of 115 freight contracts made in Amsterdam for Italy between 1591 and 1594. The years with a high number of charter-parties coincide with periods of grain shortages in Italy (1592-1594, 1606-1607). Cf. Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 83-88. For Livorno and Genoa registers of the customs offices and *Sanità*, the office listing all ships coming from areas with high risks of contagious diseases, exist, which can give an insight into the number of incoming ships. Between 1590 and 1593 a total of 227 ships from northern Europe arrived in Livorno, Braudel and Romano, *Navires et marchandises*, 51. During the period 1590-1594, it seems that some four hundred ships from that same region sailed to Genoa, Grendi, "I Nordici", 35. The numbers of ships reaching Genoa and Livorno cannot be simply added up, as ships frequently tended to call in both ports in the course of the same journey.

after Ottobon's expedition, when Venice was again facing food scarcities, the Venetian Republic made another attempt to organize the importation of cereals, this time directly from Amsterdam.

Importing Baltic grain into Venice

In 1596, Doge Grimani sent Francesco Morosini, a member of his wife's family, to Amsterdam with the assignment to buy a large ship and a cargo of grain.[48] Morosini's mission proved even less successful than Ottobon's: northern Europe was also suffering food shortages, and on 8 October 1596 the States General had ordered a ban on the export of Baltic and homegrown grain to the Mediterranean.[49] Holland and Zeeland, the two provinces most active in the *Straatvaart*, protested fiercely with the States General, pointing out the financial losses for those merchants who were already engaged in grain exports. Their case was strengthened when requests from the Venetian doge to release the grain reached The Hague, and only two weeks later, in the interest of maintaining good relations with Venice, the States General decided that the ban would be temporarily suspended. Morosini was given permission to export cereals, on the condition that the entire cargo of 10,000 *staio* of wheat was destined for Venice. The 'Sant'Agata Morosina' left Amsterdam fully loaded, but never reached its intended destination: the English captured the ship and its cargo was sold off at Portsmouth.[50]

The expeditions of Ottobon and Morosini did not yield the expected results, but in the meantime the delivery of northern grain to Venice had nonetheless begun. In April of 1591, when the shortage of bread was becoming ever more acute in the city and well before Ottobon had concluded his negotiations, a few ships had suddenly appeared, carrying grain from Danzig. According to a chronicler, so much grain was sold in the following days that it seemed as if there had been a sudden spring harvest. Grain prices fell to a third within twenty days after the ships' arrival. As prices started to plummet, those who had held on to stores of grain, waiting to make

[48] Francesco (1554-1618/19), son of another Francesco, was of the same branch of the Morosini family (the Morosini dalla Sbarra) as the Dogaressa Morosina Morosini. On his mission, also ASV, PB, Capitolari, b.4, 16 July 1596; ASV, SDB, f.1, 10 July 1598; Schutting, *Sant'Agata Morosina*.

[49] *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal, 1596-1597*, 329-330. The doge thanked the States General for their favourable response on 7 November 1596, NA The Hague, 1.01.08, Loketkast Italië, no.12578.2.2. Also Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van den Levantschen handel*, 3-4, 28-29; Kernkamp, *De handel*, vol. II, 74, 85-87, 347-348.

[50] Schutting, *Sant'Agata Morosina*, 32-33; Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van den Levantschen handel*, 28-29.

large profits, were finally induced to sell off their cereals.[51] In June, ships carrying more than 50,000 *staio* of grain from western Europe reached Venice, bringing the city further relief, but this proved only short-lived, since Italian harvests continued to be poor and prices continued to fluctuate greatly during subsequent months.[52]

Foreign traders with contacts in the northern European ports, however, quickly caught on to the possibilities which the extremely high grain prices in Italy offered, informing their business partners in ports such as Amsterdam and Danzig, with whom they organized the large shipments of cereals which arrived in April and June of 1591.[53] The continuing instability of the grain prices made this particular type of venture more interesting, since it forced the Venetian government to change its policies towards foreign merchants, creating attractive conditions to stimulate the grain import. The *Officio* now engaged directly in contracts with merchants who were able to provide foreign cereals, guaranteeing a minimum price and extending a loan covering all costs, except freight. At the start of 1591, the Senate issued special privileges to all foreign ships carrying cereals, exempting them from the harbour tax usually levied on non-Venetian vessels.[54] In 1595, the Netherlandish merchants requested and were granted that, as had been the case in previous years, they would not have to pay anchorage tax on their ships bringing grain from places such as Danzig and the province of Holland.[55] This greatly reduced costs and risks, as did the option which allowed the merchants to sell the grain in the Terraferma cities if demand in Venice was satisfied.[56]

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[51] The writer of the chronicle saw this as proof that man's avarice caused grain shortages, and not climatic conditions, Marciana, Mss. It., VII, 755 (8235), c.198.

[52] Marciana, Mss. It., VII, 755 (8235), c.198-201.

[53] Unfortunately, the records of the *Provveditori alle Biave* have some serious lacunae for the years 1590-1594 and 1601-1607. These can be partly complemented with the Senate's decisions concerning the grain supply (ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni, Biave, 1597-1602). See also Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, which contains various documents concerning the *Officio*.

[54] Foreign ships were liable to a taxation of 4.25 per cent on the value of 90 per cent of their cargo, Lane, "The merchant marine", 160. The taxation was lifted during the grain crisis, ASV, SM, f.110, 16 February 1590 (m.v.).

[55] ASV, SM, f.128, 29 September 1595; VSM, Epiloghi, r.1, 29 September 1595: "Li mercanti fiamenghi, che l'anno passato hanno condotto à Venetia formenti dalle parti di Danzica, et Olanda, siano essi, e le loro navi liberati dal dacio dell'ancoraggio". Lane erroneously concluded that this meant that ships from Holland were taxed as Venetian ones from 1596 onwards, cf. Lane, "The merchant marine", 161. But the privileges only applied to those vessels carrying a cargo of cereals, see ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.139, c.165v, 13 September 1597: "(...) che le navi, che venivano da Danzica, et Olanda, et da qualunque altro luoco di là dallo stretto di Gibilterra, quando siano cariche di frumento, non siano tenute pagar".

[56] From 1595, all ships, whether Venetian or foreign, carrying grain were completely exempt from anchorage tax, ASV, Patroni e Provveditori all'Arsenale, r.13, 29 September 1595 and ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.139, 27 August 1596.

Taking advantage of these conditions, resident Netherlandish merchants, together with a small group of Tuscan merchants in the service of Grand Duke Ferdinand I, concluded a large number of transactions with the *Officio* in the 1590s.[57] The earliest mention of a Netherlander in the documents of the *Officio* concerns Cornelio Hoons, who delivered 5,000 *staio* of grain from northwestern Europe to Venice in 1591. Two years later, he again had a contract with the *Officio* for a shipment of 16,000 *staio*.[58] Other Netherlandish traders in Venice started to participate in this new trade, either as organizers of large-scale grain transports, such as Francesco Vrins, or as financiers for compatriots, like Carlo Helman.[59] The merchants Vrins, Cornelio de Robiano, the brothers Giovanni and Giacomo Nichetti, and Melchior Quingetti also frequently did business with the *Officio*.[60]

Many of the Netherlandish merchants organizing and facilitating the import of grain in the 1590s had been living in Venice for years, working in the overland trade with Antwerp.[61] They did not all suddenly arrive in Italy on the grain ships, as has been suggested.[62] As mentioned above, Hoons, for example, had been an agent for the Della Faille firm in Venice and resided in Venice since at least the beginning of the 1580s, when he had to appear before the *Avogaria di Comun* on a charge of smuggling Netherlandish textiles into the city.[63] The Helman firm had been present in Venice since the 1570s, while Cornelio de Robiano had lived there since 1584. The latter was employed by his father, one of the most important Antwerp exporters of Netherlandish and English textiles overland to Italy via Cologne, where one of his other sons

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[57] Van Gelder, "Supplying the *Serenissima*", 48-54. For the Tuscan merchants, Pagano de Divitiis, "Grano", 169.
[58] Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.306v, 31 August 1591 and c.125v, 20 November 1593; ASV, Senato Zecca, b.1, c.91v, 28 September 1591.
[59] Helman acted as guarantor for the shipment of 12,000 *staio* by Francesco Vrins, ASV, PB, Capitolari, b.4, 19 November 1594. For Vrins, see also ASV, PB, Capitolari, b.4, 4 March 1596. Giacomo van Lemens acted as guarantor for a shipment of 16,000 *staio* by Giacomo Nichetti, Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.281r, 30 November 1601; ASV, SDB, f.1, 12 December 1601.
[60] For De Robiano, the Nichetti brothers, and Quingetti, see Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.290-292, 1 June 1602. In spite of their Italian(-ized) names, De Robiano, the Nichettis, and Quingetti were part of the *nazione fiamminga*, the Netherlandish trading nation in Venice: the Nichetti or Nicquet family was of Antwerp origin, while De Robiano and Quingetti descended from Italian families that had emigrated to the Low Countries and settled in Antwerp, blending in with the local business community. When they moved from Antwerp to Venice, they operated as part of Netherlandish firms and as members of the *nazione fiamminga*. Cf. Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé*, 160. Other traders receiving shipments of cereals in these years were Marco Manart, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.390; 391; 480; 518; Vrins' son-in-law Carlo Snellich, Ibidem, nos.515; 721; 773; Nicolò Perez, Ibidem, no.1187. For the Van Lemens brothers, ASV, CRD, b.10, 7 July 1594.
[61] Van Gelder, "Supplying the *Serenissima*", 50-54.
[62] For example by Aymard, *Venise, Raguse et le commerce du blé*, 158-161. Braudel's idea of a 'northern invasion' also implies that the Netherlanders suddenly burst upon the Mediterranean, Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. I, 634.
[63] ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.214, 1 April 1581.

resided.[64] When Francesco Vrins, who also worked for the Della Faille firm, applied for Venetian citizenship in 1593, he declared that he had been living in Venice for twenty years and he could prove that he had been paying taxes for at least twelve years.[65] Once the *Straatvaart* started, others, such as the Nichetti brothers, arrived to take advantage of the newly established trade routes, and consequently the number of Netherlandish traders in Venice did increase in the 1590s.[66]

Israel has characterized the involvement of Netherlandish traders in the grain trade with the Mediterranean as nothing more than shipping services for the account of Italian merchants.[67] Yet this was certainly not the case in Venice. When the pressing need for cereals in Venice arose, the Netherlanders quickly adopted the seaborne route - which until then had been used only by pioneering merchants such as the Della Faille brothers - to ship goods from north to south, and vice versa. Whereas the Venetians were confronted with the lack of information, contacts, and credit in northern Europe, the Netherlanders in Venice could combine their experience in the overland trade with the opportunities offered by the Amsterdam market and harbour: their relatives and business partners who had migrated from Antwerp to Amsterdam could provide them with cereals and the necessary transportation.[68] Melchior Quingetti and Cornelio de Robiano, for instance, received cereals from the most active freighter in Amsterdam, Casper (Jasper) Quingetti, Melchior's brother.[69] Cornelio Hoons traded with his Amsterdam contacts

[64] For the Helman firm's settlement, Brulez, "Venetiaanse handelsbetrekkingen". For De Robiano, Brulez, *De firma Della Faille*, 470; Kellenbenz, "Le déclin", 153.
[65] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.139, c.25, 27 September 1593; Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.19; 480; 481; 518.
[66] In 1596, the Nichetti brothers declared in a notarial record to have been in Venice for some eight to ten years. Since the direct reason for the declaration was the capture by the Spaniards of a ship carrying their goods to Amsterdam, it might be that they stressed their Venetianness, because they first appear in a notarial record only in 1592, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.368 and 684. The increase of Netherlandish merchants residing in Venice in the 1590s shall be discussed in Chapter 4.
[67] Israel, *Dutch primacy*, 54; Israel, "The Dutch merchant colonies", 88-89. This argument was first raised by Hart, who warned against underestimating the importance of Italian capital and Italian merchants in the trade between Amsterdam and Italy, Hart, "De Italië-vaart", 57. Cf. Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*, 153-155, who established that Amsterdam-based traders from the Southern Netherlands dominated the new seaborne trade: between 1591 and 1609 forty-six immigrant traders in Amsterdam were involved in grain exports to Italy, freighting 569 ships and taking care of 65 per cent of the total number of shipments. In 1606-1607, years in which Italy again was suffering from extreme food shortages, the four Antwerp merchants Jasper Quingetti, Jacques de Velaer, Isaac Lemaire, and Jan Calandrini together sent 250 ships to the Mediterranean.
[68] Van Gelder, "Supplying the *Serenissima*", 50-54.
[69] GAA, NotArch, no.115, fol.199, 11 August 1609. In 1602, Giacomo and Giovanni van Lemens received some 4,000 *staio* of rye and 900 *staio* of beans from Hans Rombouts, an Antwerp trader who had arrived in Amsterdam in 1593, GAA, NotArch, no.105, fol.182, 30 May 1602.

Johan van Uffelen and Johan van Baerle, both originally from the Southern Netherlands, while Francesco Vrins was in contact with Dirk van Os, Jan le Bruijn, and Isaac Lemaire, all formerly from Antwerp.[70]

None of the Netherlanders was more active in the grain trade than the Antwerp merchant Pietro Pellicorno, and his involvement with the Grain Office shows the full extent of Venice's dependence on these traders during the grain crises. He first appears in the documents of the *Officio* in 1595 for a shipment of 3,000 *staio*, but in later years he greatly increased his trading activities. In 1607, during another period of food shortages, Pietro imported 60,000 *staio* of wheat and 40,000 *staio* of rye, as well as 110,000 *staio* of grain under the name of his nephews, Matteo van Loosen and Martin Hureau (1575-1630), who both worked for him.[71] That year, Pellicorno dominated the trade in foreign cereals in Venice, without needing a loan from the *Officio*.[72] Pellicorno fulfilled his part of the contracts, but in March 1608 it became clear that the *Officio* could not pay for the grain received. Unable to provide the Venetians with sufficient bread in any other way, it now owed the Pellicorno firm the enormous amount of 745,901 ducats.[73] To indicate the scale of this debt, the total income of the Venetian Republic in 1602 was a little less than 2,500,000 ducats [74] The *Officio* had to resort to a special loan from the Venetian mint, the *Zecca*, to pay the bill.[75] The vast quantities of imported cereals, close to 55 per cent of the annual Venetian grain consumption, gave Pellicorno a very strong position on the Venetian grain market, and his warning to the *Officio* not to engage other merchants if they wanted a low and stable price shows that he was well aware of this.[76]

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[70] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.363 (Hoons); 707 (De Robiano); and p.630-643 (Vrins).

[71] ASV, PB, Capitolari, b.4, 27 January 1594 (m.v.); Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.117v, 29 January 1606 (m.v.).

[72] A total of 280,000 *staio* of wheat and 40,000 *staio* of rye was imported in 1607, with Pellicorno taking care of the complete quantity of rye and 61 per cent of the wheat, Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.117v-118v, 5 July 1607; ASV, PB, Capitolari, b.5, 13 May 1607. For the family connection between Pellicorno, Van Loosen, Hureau, and Alvise du Bois, see below, Chapter 4, 99-101. The other grain importers during these years were the Tuscan merchants Capponi, Baglioni, and their colleague Veglia, who all worked in the service of the Tuscan grand duke, Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.112.

[73] Pellicorno died in July 1607, Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.153; c.156v; c.207-208; ASV, PB, Capitolari, b.5, c.43; c.109v. Pellicorno had charged his heirs with fulfilling his contracts with the *Officio*. His testament, dated 25 July 1607, is even included among the *Officio*'s documents, Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.112. See also Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol.II, no.2073.

[74] Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 153.

[75] For the *Officio*'s debt, see Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.206-207; ASV, PB, Capitolari, b.5, 28 February 1607 (m.v.); and also the documents included in ASV, Senato Zecca, b.1.

[76] Correr, Donà dalle Rose, no.218, c.117v, 5 July 1607. For the annual grain consumption in Venice, see above, note 21.

Their important role at a time when the Venetian Republic was badly in need of provisions is something the Netherlandish traders themselves called attention to when they requested a favour from the Venetian government. When Hureau and his cousin Alvise du Bois (1583-1651) asked for certain trade privileges in 1614, they explicitly referred to the vast amounts of grain their uncle Pellicorno had imported in previous decades.[77] The same happened in 1602, when Quingetti, De Robiano, and the Nichetti brothers failed to fulfil their contract with the *Officio* to deliver at least 50,000 *staio* of grain. They had to ask for a postponement, and in their petition to the Senate, the merchants argued that they had been the first to import grain from northern Europe, and also that they had been the first to lower the price to 19 lire per *staio*.[78] Was this pure rhetoric or were they indeed responsible for those first grain ships arriving in Venice in April 1591, when Ottobon was still struggling in Danzig? The gaps in the documents of the *Officio* do not allow us to verify their claims, yet the Senate did grant the postponement, showing that the Venetian authorities were willing to accommodate these traders.

During the 1590s, the character of the Netherlandish merchants' commerce with Venice clearly transformed and acquired greater importance. With the presence of its own merchants in the trading centres of northern Europe significantly reduced, Venice depended on others to organize the shipments of Baltic grain and was forced to relax its protectionist measures. The Netherlanders exploited this situation and, together with the Tuscan grand duke's agents, became the principal suppliers of foreign cereals. The Netherlandish maritime trade relations were revolutionary in form - large-scale maritime trade in bulk goods - but they rested firmly on previously established foundations. For some traders, like those involved in the Della Faille family firm, the *Straatvaart* of the 1590s was a logical continuation of the attempts at maritime commerce during the 1580s. The majority of Netherlandish importers could rely on their experience and contacts developed in the overland trade between Venice and the Low Countries, which had also made them familiar with the workings of Venetian commercial institutions. It is indicative of the difference in commercial interests and experience among the northern merchants that few English traders participated in the supply of northern grain. The only Englishman

[77] ASV, CRD, b.13, 24 October 1614.
[78] ASV, SDB, f.1, 29 May 1602.

engaged in a contract with the Grain Office was Paolo (Paul) Pindar.[79] But this was a one-time involvement for Pindar, who in all probability acted on behalf of the Tuscan agents Baglioni and Capponi, who stood as his guarantors.[80]

That the maritime grain trade of the 1590s gave the Netherlanders the opportunity to establish themselves as a force to be reckoned with was not just emphasized by the fact that the Senate consulted the *nazione fiamminga* for the first time in 1596, but was also reflected during one of the most spectacular events of this decade. In May 1597, the coronation of Dogaressa Morosina Morosini Grimani, wife of Doge Marino Grimani, was celebrated with elaborate festivities.[81] On the third and final day of the celebrations, a crowd of people gathered in the Piazzetta, the open space between the Ducal Palace and the waterfront. A large fleet composed of every imaginable type of Venetian vessel had gathered in front of the Piazzetta, filled with more people gazing out over the water in anticipation. When the dogaressa emerged on the *sottoportico* of the Ducal Palace, spectators saw a group of foreign-made boats advancing towards them from the direction of the island of Giudecca. As the boats drew nearer, it became clear that the twenty-four vessels were launches manned by sailors who had arrived just a few days before, on Netherlandish merchantmen carrying cereals.[82] When they had drawn up close to the Piazzetta, the Netherlanders fired off a salute, divided themselves into two opposing rows, and started "una piacevole, e ridicolosa giostra", a delightful and comical tournament: one member of each crew stood at the stern of his launch and, equipped with a long spear, tried to push his opponents into the water. Their mock combat was captured by the Venetian engraver Giacomo Franco, who made a series of prints depicting the celebrations (Ill. 2.2).[83] The Netherlanders continued with their jousting until only one man was left standing, and finished their performance with some other games - pulling eels and geese tied to ropes between the boats - before rowing away in the direction of the Canal Grande while firing their cannons incessantly.[84]

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[79] ASV, Senato Zecca, b.1, 16 June 1591, c.86v. Pindar started his career as a factor in Venice, but later became one of the leading Levant Company merchants and ambassador for James I in Constantinople, *Dictionary of National Biography*, "Sir Paul Pindar".
[80] Fusaro, "The English mercantile community", 57-58.
[81] Marino Grimani was doge between 1595 and 1605. For the dogaressa's coronation, Wilson, "'Il bel sesso'"; Muir, *Civic ritual*, 292-296. On the public function of the dogaressa, see Hurlburt, *Dogaressa*.
[82] Tuzio, *Ordine et modo*, 19; Rota, *Lettera*, [H1v].
[83] On Franco's prints, Wilson, "'Il bel sesso'", esp. 98-99.
[84] Tuzio, *Ordine et modo*, 19-20; Rota, *Lettera*, [H2r]. Tuzio speaks of twenty-five crews of "Fiamenghi, Olandesi, & Zelandesi", while Rota describes twenty-four boats with Flemings from Zeeland and Holland participating in the festivities.

Venice was a city used to foreign merchants and sailors, but the spectacle put on by the Netherlanders was something the Venetians had not witnessed before.[85] Imminent food shortages had formed the backdrop for Marino Grimani's election on 26 April 1595, and continued to leave their mark on his ducal reign, showing how Venetian politics in these years were interwoven with concerns for food supplies. As a ducal candidate, Grimani had won the sympathy of the Venetian poor by providing them with great quantities of bread, and throughout the conclave the *popolani* had surrounded the Ducal Palace, forcefully demanding his election. Subsequently, during the celebrations following his appointment, Grimani distributed almost all the bread available in the Venetian bakeries.[86] While in office, he endeavoured to stimulate the import of cereals through the Morosini expedition to Amsterdam, and within a few months after his election, the Senate confirmed that Netherlandish merchants did not have to pay anchorage taxes on vessels carrying grain.[87]

The festivities of 1597 exalted the eminence of Venice, with members of the building guilds constructing a complex of triumphal arches expressing Venetian political identity. The event was also used to depict the nobility and merits of the Morosini and Grimani families. The butchers' guild built a triumphal arch which stressed the families' offices and honours, and which was surmounted by a female figure (Venice) holding a staff, symbolizing authority, and bundles of wheat, symbolizing prosperity.[88] The performance by the Netherlandish sailors, dressed in the Grimani colours, was clearly intended to underline the doge's commitment to the city's provisioning.[89] At the same time, the mock naval battle re-enacted by the crew of the grain ships in front of the Ducal Palace was a demonstration of Netherlandish commercial power and nautical skills, reminding spectators how the Netherlanders had supplied the city with much-needed cereals and heralding their increasingly dominant role in the coming years.

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[85] Foreign elements do not seem to have been part of the few dogaressa coronations that took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: during the coronation of Dogaressa Priuli in 1557, a galley from Crete joined the Bucintoro in an aquatic procession to Piazza San Marco, Marcello, *Ordine et* progreesso, while the Germans decorated the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* in 1597, Tuzio, *Ordine et modo*, 9-10.

[86] Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 76-77. Many patricians were suspicious of Grimani's demagogic tendencies, which is why the coronation of his wife was postponed until 1597, Hochmann, "Le mécénat de Marino Grimani", 42; Muir, *Civic ritual*, 293.

[87] ASV, SM, f.128, 29 September 1595; VSM, Epiloghi, r.1, 29 September 1595. See also Tenenti, *Naufrages*, 202-203, for the shipwreck of three grain ships from Hamburg, chartered by the Signoria while Grimani was in office.

[88] Muir, *Civic ritual*, 295-296.

[89] For detailed descriptions of the guilds' participation in the coronation, Tuzio, *Ordine et modo*, 4ff and Rota, *Lettera*, passim. The last also describes how the public watching the spectacle was impressed by the skilfull Netherlandish sailors: "cominciarono à far diversi giuochi tra loro, secondo l'uso de' loro paesi, che riuscirono gratissimi à spettatori, specialmente per veder la maniera tenuta da genti da noi tanto rimote".

Chapter 3. Combining the new with the old: Netherlandish-Venetian trade after the 1590s

The case of Cornelis Jansen

When the 'Hercules' arrived in Venice in May 1605, having set sail from Amsterdam in November of the previous year, its cargo consisted of a great variety of commodities, but did not contain any trace of cereals, indicating how maritime commerce had rapidly became more diversified after the food shortages of the 1590s had first triggered the *Straatvaart*.[1] Records of the entire contents of mercantile vessels calling at the port of Venice are virtually nonexistent, which makes the files describing the cargo of the 'Hercules' so valuable.[2] Even though they relate to only one ship, these documents show in great detail what was transported from Amsterdam to Venice at the beginning of the seventeenth century. They also allow for a reconstruction of commercial practices and the way Netherlandish merchants abroad assisted one another, in the daily routine of business and in times of trouble.

This documentation has survived because of the misfortunes of Cornelis Jansen. Jansen, born in Hoorn - a port town north of Amsterdam - arrived in Venice on the 'Hercules' and appeared before the Venetian court of the Council of Forty on 28 June 1605. He sought to appeal a sentence passed at the beginning of that same month by the office of the *Avogaria di Comun*, which had judged him guilty of trafficking in contraband and had confiscated part of his goods.[3] To argue their case, both parties in Jansen's trial collected evidence on the cargo of the 'Hercules'. In the opening statement of his appeal, Jansen, assisted by his Venetian lawyer, sought to portray himself as an innocent victim of circumstances.[4] He repeatedly referred to himself as a "povero forestiero" or unfortunate stranger, and claimed that he had neither knowledge of the Italian language nor any acquaintances in Venice.[5] Of course he had every interest in depicting himself as a naive outsider, who, ignorant of Venetian law, had

[1] The 'Hercules' was property of the Amsterdam ship-owner Gerrit Claesz Somer, GAA, NotArch, no.98, fol.224, 21 October 1604; no.99, fol.7-8, 30 October 1605.
[2] On the lack of Venetian sources to study the volume and type of maritime trade for this period, see Lane, "The merchant marine", 143-1530.
[3] There were three courts of the Forty in Venice: Jansen pleaded his appeal before the *Quarantia Civil Vecchia*, the Council of Forty which heard civil cases in Venice. Since 1492 a separate court had existed for civil cases from the mainland (*Quarantia Civil Nuova*), while the *Quarantia Criminal* heard serious criminal cases, Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 39. Cornelis Jansen's case is found in ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5 and 34/8.
[4] Jansen employed Giovanni Rotta as his lawyer, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.1720.
[5] ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5, c.5r: "inesperto della lingua italiana, et senza cognitione d'alcuno".

unintentionally gotten into trouble, but the evidence contained in his two case files suggests that these claims were not merely the usual tropes employed before the court. Jansen's claims are backed up by testimonies given by his fellow passengers on the 'Hercules' and by resident Netherlandish merchants in Venice, but above all by the detailed inventory of his merchandise.[6] The records from this court case show what Jansen had hoped to sell in Venice: the bulk of his goods consisted of 5,100 rounds of cheese and twenty-seven sacks of beans. He had also brought some spices, more specifically two sacks of pepper and a small barrel of mace. The rest of his merchandise included two pieces of cloth, nine boxes of candles, three barrels of talc, three pieces of linen, a small quantity of yarn, four and a half dozen stockings, and two boxes of glass bottles. This rather motley collection, the small quantities, and the fact that Jansen was hoping to sell bottles in Venice, the glass-producing centre of early modern Europe, indicate that he was not an experienced international merchant, but rather someone with limited means and only a vague idea of what might be profitable merchandise in Venice. In the dossier he is referred to as 'merzaro' or mercer, which confirms this suspicion.[7]

Before the 'Hercules' arrived in Venice, it had first called at the port of Ancona.[8] Here Cornelis Jansen took the opportunity to trade part of his merchandise with a Jewish merchant, one David Abaus, and it was this business deal that would cause him so much trouble in Venice.[9] The transaction between Abaus and Jansen involved three different methods of payment: Jansen bartered a quantity of cheeses for sixty pieces of camlet (silk cloth). Barter (*baratto*), the exchange of commodities of equal value, was still common practice in the Mediterranean. Since the cheese was worth more than the camlets, Jansen received the difference partly in ready money, partly in letters of exchange, which he could present to other Jewish merchants in Venice. The 'Hercules' then sailed from Ancona to Venice, while Jansen for unknown reasons chose to travel overland. Upon his arrival he went to look for the shipmaster to enquire about his

[6] The inventory of the cargo of the 'Hercules' was drawn up by Venetian port officials and Jansen's original bill of lading from Amsterdam was also included in the files as evidence, see ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5 and b.34/8.
[7] ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5, c.5r. He is also described as "cramer", the Netherlandish term for mercer.
[8] The time it took the 'Hercules' to reach the Mediterranean is not known, but in general the voyage could take anything from five to twelve weeks, depending on the weather conditions and the number of ports of call, Van Royen, "The first phase", 87. At the start of the *Straatvaart*, ships sailed to a single destination, but as the crew and traders became more familiar with this new sea route, voyages in which stops at different harbours in the Mediterranean were combined became increasingly common.
[9] Ancona was the Adriatic harbour of the papal domains and, like Venice and Livorno, one of the Italian port cities with extensive trade privileges for Jewish merchants, Ravid, "A tale of three cities", 141-143.

merchandise. As he testified in court, the shipmaster Claes Pietersen told him he could have some of his goods once he had paid the *dazio*, the Venetian customs duties, but that the rest was still on board the ship undergoing quarantine and would be released shortly.[10] What the shipmaster failed to mention was that a significant part of Jansen's merchandise had already been confiscated as contraband goods by officers of the *Sanità*, the official Venetian body concerned with the prevention of contagious diseases, and by the *Avogaria di Comun*.

The shipmaster's lapse cannot have been due to inexperience because this was not the first time Pietersen had sailed to Venice. Pietersen already knew quite a few of the resident Netherlandish merchants, like the brothers Van Lemens, at whose house he stayed, and Nicolò Perez.[11] The picture that emerges from the testimonies of Cornelis Jansen, crewmembers of the 'Hercules', resident Netherlandish merchants, and Venetian port officials is that the shipmaster had failed to report the camlets from Ancona and Jansen's other pieces of fabric to the *Sanità*. The Netherlandish merchant Perez testified that when the shipmaster and Jansen had come to his house, bringing him the cheese he had ordered for his personal consumption, the shipmaster took the opportunity to introduce him to Jansen, asking him to assist the new arrival in selling his goods. Perez told the court he had replied he would help Jansen in every possible way.[12] Some three or four days later, the shipmaster returned to Perez's and told him of the confiscation of Jansen's merchandise, asking him for advice.[13] When Perez asked the shipmaster why he had not sent the cargo over to the Lazzaretto island, the shipmaster told him that he had forgotten about Jansen's merchandise and when he remembered, the ship had already been in quarantine for

[10] Since 1485, the Venetians required all ships, crew, and cargo coming from regions suspected of being infected with the plague to undergo a forty-day detention. Certain goods were not considered dangerous, like salted fish, cereals, wood, and wine, but books and especially textiles were suspect, Lane, *Venice*, 18; Morachiello, "Lazzaretti", 827. Fierce outbreaks of the plague occurred in the province of Holland in the decade 1595-1605, Noordegraaf and Valk, *De gave Gods*, 43.

[11] Like most of the shipmasters sailing between the Netherlands and Italy in this period, Pietersen came from the region north of Amsterdam, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, nos.1818; 1879. A large part of his crew also came from that area: while in Venice, four crewmembers went to a Venetian notary and registered a series of complaints against the cook of the 'Hercules'. They accused him of having refused to take his turn at the helm and of having stolen large quantities from the ship's stocks of beef, bacon, and cheese while at anchor in Venice, which he then had squandered in brothels and taverns. In addition to yielding a glimpse of the irritations that could develop in the close confinements below deck, these notarial records tell us that the sailors came from the northern part of the province of Holland. This fits in with the findings of Hart, "De Italië-vaart", 50-51. Maybe the experiences of seamen from his native region had inspired Cornelis Jansen to undertake his expedition to Italy. The first mate of the 'Hercules', Simon de Piero, stated for the court that he was an old friend of Jansen, ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5, c.9r.

[12] ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5, c.10v-11r.

[13] ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5, c.11v: Perez stated that he had admonished the shipmaster, telling him that one must never joke with the *Sanità*: "con la Sanità non bisognava trescar".

several days. Besides, he had thought that since the goods came from Ancona, there really was no need. Then, when the port officials had found out, he had tried to persuade them to be lenient by offering them a drink and, in order to speed things up, he had told them that the goods were his.[14]

The point Cornelis Jansen, or rather his lawyer, sought to bring home to the Council of Forty in May was that, yes, the goods loaded at Amsterdam were his and he had traded a quantity of cheeses in Ancona for sixty camlets, but he had nothing to do with the incident involving the *Sanità*, having arrived in Venice much later by land. A number of witnesses testified in his favour, describing the passage of his merchandise from the port of Amsterdam to Italy. Giovanni Engrebreth, passenger on the 'Hercules' and supercargo of the Van Lemens brothers, had helped Jansen load the merchandise in Amsterdam. Another passenger, the Englishman Pietro Wachier, who stayed in the house of Netherlandish merchant Giovanni de Wale, testified that during the voyage Jansen had checked his goods every day, anxiously looking for signs of humidity and deterioration. In Ancona, Engrebreth had also been witness to the transaction between Jansen and Abaus. Not only was Jansen assisted by fellow passengers during the voyage to Venice, Netherlandish merchants also aided him in different ways once he had arrived in the city. Perez, for example, confirmed that some time after shipmaster Pietersen had come to see him, he had encountered two Jews at Rialto, who had told him they had done business with Cornelis Jansen in Ancona. The Netherlandish merchant Justus Cloes had collected the freight costs of approximately 160 ducats from Jansen, while Martin Hureau told the court that he had converted Jansen's letter of exchange, receiving 300 ducats from a Jewish merchant. Then Jansen had asked him to pay the customs duties for his merchandise with part of that sum, because he himself did not know how.[15] With his limited knowledge of international trade and no Italian, Jansen was able to fall back on these resident traders.

Many of the helpful Netherlandish merchants mentioned in the case files also had merchandise on board of the 'Hercules'. A comparison between Jansen's goods and the cargo other merchants received from the 'Hercules' further strengthens the impression that his trip to Italy had been something of a gamble. The two brothers Giacomo and Giovanni van Lemens

[14] Testimonies by the port officials confirmed not only this, but also that Claes Pietersen had tried to buy them off, offering them increasing amounts of money and assuring them that his friends, the merchants Van Lemens, would provide them with more. When this strategy did not work, he had tried in desperation to shut them out of his cabin to prevent them from executing their search. When the port officials had gained entrance, they immediately discovered the camlets, stowed under Pietersen's bunk, ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/8, c.16v-22r.
[15] ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5, c.7v; 14r; 15r; 18v-19r.

received the main part of the goods: twenty-two packs of dried hides plus 880 loose hides (700 dried, 180 salted), 244 pieces of pockwood, twenty-one barrels of spices, twenty-two barrels of peas, hundred casks of fish-oil, and an unspecified quantity of iron. Carlo Helman received twenty-five small barrels of talc and 93 boxes with candles. The two Netherlanders Carlo Gabri and Giovanni de Wale collected a quantity of pepper: ten small barrels for Gabri and seven bales for De Wale, while Giovanni Battista Schoemacher was delivered some kerseys. Although Netherlandish merchants received the biggest share of the cargo, some non-Netherlandish traders also received goods from the 'Hercules'. The Venetian firm of Simon Fioravanti and Pietro Labia collected a large quantity of salted beef, while Tito Livio Buratino, agent for the German Cleinhans firm, received four bales of pepper, indicating maybe that cargo from Amsterdam was being routed through Venice to the German hinterland.[16] Looking at the complete list of cargo of the 'Hercules', it becomes clear that the main difference between Jansen and the experienced resident Netherlandish merchants was not so much the type of goods they traded in, but the quantity of the products such as spices, candles, and talc they had shipped.

As mentioned above, cereals, the commodity that had launched the maritime trade between the Netherlands and Venice, were completely absent. Once grain prices had returned to a normal level in the Mediterranean, importing grain from northern Europe was much too costly an affair. Only when prices were extremely high in the Mediterranean and famine appeared to be imminent did importation become a profitable option, as was the case in, for example, 1590-1593, 1596-1597, and 1600-1601.[17] Instead the ship carried mainly large quantities of cheese, leather, and metal. Yet what makes the case of the 'Hercules' especially noteworthy, is that it contains the first mention of pepper imported into Venice by Netherlandish merchants, showing that just three years after the foundation of the VOC, the northerners were already gaining control over what had for centuries been the domain of Venice.[18]

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[16] The 'Hercules' also unloaded 225 small tons of tin, eight casks of caviar, and two barrels of rasped pockwood for unknown merchants, ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/8, c.8r-15v. On the Cleinhans firm, Brulez, *De firma Della Faille*, 324-5, 411-2 and Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.37; 38; 94.

[17] This coincides with the findings by Engels who determined the cargoes of Netherlandish ships arriving in Livorno for different years during the first half of the seventeenth century: for example, in 1620 80 per cent of Netherlandish ships carried cereals. Five years later, when there were no grain shortages in Italy, the ships brought fish, cheese, salted meat, leather, sugar, and spices, Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 91, 97.

[18] The voyages of the VOC had been preceded by attempts by smaller companies, such as the Compagnie van Verre (Company for Distant Voyages). This consortium of Amsterdam merchants sent out a small fleet in 1595 which, when it returned in 1597, was the first to prove that direct trade with Asia was possible, Israel, *Dutch primacy*, 67-68. In 1605 pepper from Holland also started to arrive in Livorno, Braudel and Romano, *Navires et marchandises*, 57.

Expanding commercial contacts

As commercial contacts between the Northern Netherlands and Venice increased, the Netherlandish merchants became the link which firmly connected the Italian republic to the northern trading world. They do not seem to have specialized in specific commodities, but combined trade in a broad range of goods. Carlo Helman, for instance, traded in jewellery as well as candles or wool. In 1597, Marco Manart was the first to import stockfish and whale oil from the north in large quantities, receiving a special concession from the Senate in the form of a reduced import tax rate.[19] Fish was an essential part of the Venetian diet, especially during Lent, and salted fish or *salumi* would become an important element of both the Netherlanders' and English commerce in Venice.[20] In 1602 the *Cinque Savi* established that Manart's concession had been a success, yielding 1,400 ducats in import tax over a period of four years and also an additional income from the export tax, since much of the fish was re-exported to the Terraferma.[21] Other merchants, such as Pietro Pellicorno and Marco Moens, followed suit, importing large quantities of herring.[22]

Russian commodities, such as hemp, leather, wax, fur, and caviar, also started to become part of the Netherlanders' trade in the late 1590s.[23] In 1597, Francesco Vrins and Giacomo van Lemens claimed to be the first to have sent ships directly from Muscovy to Venice, laden with hemp and hemp cables for the Arsenal. Because of the food shortages at the end of the sixteenth century, it became more attractive to produce grain than hemp in Italy, driving up the price of hemp and making it a valuable long-distance import.[24] After the death of Pietro Pellicorno, his

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Cf. Israel, "The Dutch merchant colonies", 89, who states that practically none of the spices and pepper imported by the VOC reached the Mediterranean before 1609.

[19] For Manart's request and privilege, ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.139, c.92, 7 March 1596; VSM, Epiloghi, r.16, c.32, 17 October 1597.

[20] In the 1620s, taxes on the trade in *salumi* had increased, causing the Netherlanders and English to lodge repeated protests. On the cooperation of these two groups, see below, Chapter 5, 132-133.

[21] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.144, c.191v, 16 July 1602. Manart had requested a renewal, which was granted.

[22] For Pellicorno, ASV, CRD, r.12, 23 April 1606; r.13, 24 October 1614. In 1637, Moens sold 874 barrels of herring for the price of 2,876 ducats to a Venetian *salumiere*, ASV, NA, b.10797, c.808r-808v, 4 February 1637.

[23] Antwerp immigrants had launched new trading initiatives between Amsterdam and Muscovy in the 1580s, and from the 1590s Netherlandish traders started to settle in Archangel, Veluwenkamp, *Archangel*, Chapter 2. Many of the Southern Netherlanders who had settled in Amsterdam had an interest in both the Muscovy and Italian trades, Wijnroks, *Handel*, esp. Chapter 8.

[24] On Venice's need for hemp, Celetti, "The Arsenal of Venice"; Lane, "The rope factory", 269-284.

heirs also claimed that he had initiated the import of Russian commodities. He had indeed been receiving shipments of hemp, caviar and different types of leather since at least 1597.[25]

In times of political tension or military conflict the Netherlandish merchants also played an important role in delivering war supplies from the Dutch Republic to the Venetian state. It was Pellicorno who provided great quantities of gunpowder and ammunition to Venice in 1606, the year of the Interdict, when tension between the Republic and the pope reached a climax. Doge Leonardo Donà thanked the States General for permitting the export of war supplies and requested that another cargo be sent to Venice.[26] The Netherlanders continued to supply the Venetian navy during the Uskok War of 1615-1618.[27] For instance, Martin Hureau, who had taken over Pellicorno's business, delivered three cargoes of gunpowder in 1618-1619 for a total of 22,000 ducats.[28] In 1616, as part of the war effort against the Uskoks, Venice had sent secretary Christofforo Suriano to the Dutch Republic with the task of hiring ships and troops, an enterprise which involved enormous amounts of money.[29] The ships were provided by a consortium of Amsterdam merchants, whose correspondents in Venice, amongst others Daniel Nijs, Melchior Noirot, Giovanni de Wale, and Stefano van Neste, received payments of thousands of ducats through the *Banco Giro*.[30] During the war over Candia, Giacomo Stricher provided the Venetian navy with three ships and supplies, such as dried stockfish, smoked and salted fish, rice, cheese, cordage, and candles.[31]

Seeing how much the overseas trade with Venice had increased during the final decades of the sixteenth century, the States General appointed Egidio (Gillis) Ouwercx in 1614 as consul and sent him to the port city to assist shipmasters and crewmembers from the Low Countries.[32]

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[25] ASV, CRD, b.13, 24 October 1614. On 5 April 1599, Pellicorno received a shipment from Muscovy containing leather, caviar and hemp, ASV, SM, f.141. Cf. Schwarzenberg, *Ricerche sull'assicurazione*, 34. On the Netherlanders' trade in Moscovian goods in general, ASV, SM, f.134, 12 June 1597; ASV, VSM, Epiloghi, r.3, c.641, 12 June 1597; VSM, Risposte, r.141, c.192v, 16 January 1606 (m.v.).

[26] ASV, CRD, b.13, 24 October 1614; NA The Hague, States General, 1.01.08, Loketkas Italy, 12578.2.2, 29 September 1606. Pellicorno's business partner in Amsterdam, Caspar van Colen (Ceulen) sent 600,000 pounds of gunpowder, 200,000 pounds of sulphur, and 100,000 pounds of saltpetre to Venice between 1606 and 1608, De Jong, *'Staat van oorlog'*, 179.

[27] ASV, CRD, b.23, 9 June 1632 and b.40, 26 January 1649 (m.v.). Also Zunckel, *Rüstungsgeschäfte im Dreißigjährigen Krieg*, 154.

[28] ASV, SBG, f.1 (1619-1624).

[29] Geyl, *Christofforo Suriano*, 20-35, 66-74, and passim; De Jong, *'Staat van oorlog'*, 90, 157, 179.

[30] ASV, SBG, f.1 (1619-1624), payments in June and July 1619. The venture would cause the bankruptcy of the Quingetti firm, represented by Casper in Amsterdam and his brother Melchior in Venice, in December 1617, Geyl, *Christofforo Suriano*, 204, 208, 215, 218.

[31] ASV, AC, Prove di nobiltà, b.247, n.80, c.18r-30r and see below, Chapter 6, 173-175.

[32] On his role as consul, see below, Chapter 5, 145-150.

The number of ships arriving in the Mediterranean could vary greatly, but the next years must have been especially busy for Ouwercx. Between September 1615 and April 1617 eighty-five Netherlandish ships called at Venice, and Ouwercx diligently recorded the cargo of the first forty-three vessels.[33] The majority of these ships had not sailed in from northern Europe, but from other Mediterranean ports, mostly from Seville (7 ships) with wool, from Crete (6) bringing currants and wine, and from Puglia (5) and Sicily (3) with grain. Maritime trade between the different Mediterranean ports was intensive and lucrative, and the Venetians had always had a significant share, especially in the eastern Mediterranean. This information shows that with the Venetian merchant marine dwindling, Netherlandish ships also provided the city with essential raw materials and foodstuffs from within the Mediterranean.[34]

Many shipmasters from the Netherlands criss-crossed the Mediterranean looking for profitable cargo. Claes Pietersen of the 'Hercules', for instance, sailed a couple of times between Venice and Cyprus before returning to Amsterdam in August 1606.[35] That Amsterdam merchants and ship-owners themselves had an interest in the intra-mediterranean trade becomes apparent from the arguments used by supporters and opponents of a plan devised in 1629 to organize a 'compagnie van assurantie', a general insurance for all European trade to protect shipping against piracy. Both sides quoted the intra-mediterranean trade as an example supporting their cause, emphasizing their concern for this branch of overseas commerce. The merchants proposing the plan stated that Ottoman pirates and Spanish bans had greatly damaged trade: the practice of sailing to the Straits with only a small amount of cargo in the hope of making a profit by traversing the Mediterranean with Spanish and Italian freights had virtually ceased to exist.[36] The opponents pointed out that costs would increase, which would lead to a further loss of the Netherlandish share in the Mediterranean shipping services to the advantage of the English.

Profit must have outweighed the dangers to this particular branch of commerce, since the Netherlandish merchants in Venice continued to participate in the intra-mediterranean trade. They kept up regular contacts with business partners and compatriots in Spain, which was the

[33] ASV, VSM, nuova serie, b.24, Console olandese in Venetia, 16 September 1615. The list of ships is also included in Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 62. Unfortunately, no such detailed lists of ships have survived for other years or maybe Ouwercx became less conscientious.

[34] Also Sella, "L'economia", 658. Cf. Greene, "Beyond the northern invasion", who states that in the seventeenth century trade within the Mediterranean became an anarchic commercial activity, with no one gaining the upper hand.

[35] ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5, c.9r.

[36] Blok, "Koopmansadviezen", 52, and 64-65: "soodat de schepen, die om een geringe vracht plachten uyt te varen, maeckende haer fortuijn om in de Midlantsche Zee met Spaensche ende Italiaensche bevrachtinge over ende weer te varen, dat nu voor 't meerderendeel stilstaet".

main source of wool for the Venetian and Veneto textile industries.[37] For instance, Daniel Nijs, as agent for the Gabri firm, received 79 bales of wool from Seville on four different ships in 1604.[38] Others, including Luca van Uffelen and Giovanni van Mere, also imported wool from Spain, while Gualterio van der Voort and Samuel Boudewijns sent mirrors and camlets to their agent Guglielmo Becquer in Seville in 1639.[39] When Spanish embargoes on trade and shipping from the Dutch Republic were in force, the Netherlandish merchants in Venice took the precaution of declaring in advance before a Venetian notary that the ship and merchandise had not come from Holland, but from neutral territory, such as Venice, the Levant, the Spanish Netherlands or Germany.[40] Giovanni Reijnst even obtained a license from the Senate, which gave him the monopoly on the export of salt from Ibiza via Venetian territory to Lombardy. The Venetians hoped that this would undercut the Genoese salt trade with Milan. As official "condutor del partito de sali di Milano", Reijnst was given the keys to the Venetian salt warehouses.[41]

Amsterdam-Mediterranean trade in 1646-1647

The rigorous Venetian *Sanità* must have generated an enormous amount of paperwork, documenting their inspection of arriving ships and registering the confiscation of cargo and ships of those who, like the shipmaster of the 'Hercules', tried to evade quarantine. Unfortunately, these papers have not been preserved, nor have those of other Venetian port authorities such as the customs offices, which makes it impossible to give an indication based on Venetian documents of what commodities Netherlandish merchants may have imported and exported.[42]

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[37] Panciera, *L'arte matrice*, 13-68; Israel, "Spanish wool exports", 194. For merchants from the Southern Netherlands in Spain, see Stols, *De Spaanse Brabanders*; Stols, *Les marchands flamands*; Benassar, "Marchands flamands et italiens"; Berthe, "Les Flamands".

[38] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.1477.

[39] ASV, NA, b.10766, c.140r, 9 March 1621; b.10799, c.944r-v, 12 February 1638 (m.v.). Trade with Spain continued to be part of the Netherlanders' business over the years, see, for example, ASV, NA, b.10781, c.234r, 8 March 1630; c.290v, 22 March 1630; b.10782, c.494v-495r, 8 June 1630; c.730v-731v, 13 September 1630; b.10801, c.257r, 11 May 1638; c.427r-427v, 18 December 1640; b.10822, c.378v-379r, 9 December 1650.

[40] The notarial archives abound with these declarations, see, for example, ASV, NA, b.10797, c.722v-723v, 18 June 1637; c.828r-828v, 15 February 1637 (m.v.); b.10799, c.924r-924v, 8 February 1638 (m.v.); c.944r-944v, 12 February 1638 (m.v.); b.10802, c.174r-174v, 11 June 1640.

[41] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.149, 23 August 1633; CRD, b.33, 22 January 1642 (m.v.).

[42] The documents left by the *Sanità* offices in Genoa and Livorno, for example, have provided valuable data on trade and shipping in these two harbours, see Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*; Braudel and Romano, *Navires et marchandises*; Grendi, "I Nordici".

Source material from the Netherlands helps to fill this gap: a detailed tax register from Amsterdam covering nearly twelve months between the years 1646 and 1647 provides in-depth information on the maritime commerce between this port and Venice at the end of the period covered in this book.[43]

Between 30 May 1646 and 8 May 1647, every ship and all the merchandise in the Amsterdam harbour destined for or coming from the Mediterranean was registered, assessed and taxed by order of the Board of Levant Trade. In 1646, the Board had decided on an extraordinary tax to finance a mission to Louis XIV to negotiate the restitution of five ships from the Dutch Republic, confiscated by the French navy. They sent Giovanni Reijnst to Paris to assist the Dutch ambassador in negotiating the release of the captured vessels as well as a treaty which would safeguard Netherlandish ships from French interventions.[44] Reijnst had been active as a merchant in Venice since at least 1625, but had travelled to Amsterdam in 1645.[45] Well acquainted with the ins and outs of the *Straatvaart*, he was the appropriate candidate for this mission.[46] Since the States General were unwilling to finance Reijnst's mission, the Board decided to levy an additional tax of 0.5 per cent on the value of all Mediterranean import and export in the ports of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Schiedam, Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Edam, Monnickendam, and Medemblik. The only surviving register is that for the Amsterdam chamber, which lists goods, ships, and the merchants paying the tax.[47] The register covers barely one year and in that time span

[43] NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, "Den ophef van een half per cent over goederen van en uyt de Middelantse Zee sedert anno 1646 tot anno 1647". Part of this register is included in the appendix of Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 212-361.

[44] Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 1070ff and Logan, *The 'cabinet'*, 30-33. France was at that moment involved in a war against the Habsburgs and patrolled the Gulf of Lion, which reached from the border with Catalonia in the West to Toulon, in an attempt to block trade with Spain. They were especially keen to detain and search Dutch merchantmen, which they suspected of providing the Spanish with war supplies.

[45] Logan, *The 'cabinet'*, 29.

[46] Reijnst arrived in Paris on September 6, 1645, but had to wait until the beginning of December to start discussing the issue with Cardinal Mazarin, the chief minister of France. The negotiations took longer than Reijnst had anticipated and he became especially impatient to return to his own affairs when he received the news in February 1646 that his business partner in Venice had died. Nonetheless, he stayed on until negotiations were concluded in April of that year, Logan, *The 'cabinet'*, 32-33.

[47] Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 214. No information from the other harbour towns participating in the Board survives, except for the entry in the Amsterdam register of 900 guilders from the city of Hoorn for the period of May 1646 until the end of the year, and 271 guilders collected in Medemblik over the period May 1646 until May 1647. The difference in revenue between Amsterdam and the two smaller harbour towns shows that in Hoorn and Medemblik trade with the Mediterranean was less important than shipping; many vessels from these ports were chartered by Amsterdam merchants, Lesger, *Hoorn*, 43.

commodities for the total amount of 2,349,701 guilders were imported from the Mediterranean, while the export was estimated at 2,453,148 guilders.[48]

The Amsterdam register is a monthly account of all cargo shipped to this port from the Mediterranean and vice versa, and consists of a little over 280 folios.[49] During each month, the clerks would register the goods brought by merchants to the ships lying at anchor in the port of Amsterdam. For instance, on 3 July 1646 the merchant Jeremias van Ceulen consigned two packs of 'heeresayen' (serge), one barrel of English tin, and a quantity of peas to the shipmaster Jacob Cornelisz Swart to be transported to Italy. Three days later he delivered some German tin, three crates of cheese, two barrels of nutmeg, and two packs of yuft, and on 7 July two packs of 'camerixdoeck' (cambric) to the same shipmaster.[50] Over the next months Van Ceulen continued to deliver batches of goods to different ships lying at the quays.[51] The tax records show that many shipmasters waited for months in the Amsterdam harbour, while the holds of their ships slowly filled with merchandise to be sent to the Mediterranean. Others are registered only once, such as Jacob Pietersz Trompetter who, on 7 August 1646, took on board forty pounds of elephant tusks and eight pieces of 'camerixdoeck' from the merchant Adriaen Roeuland to be shipped to Malaga. Trompetter had probably sailed to the port of Amsterdam from another northern European harbour in the hope of collecting some additional freight before setting off for the Mediterranean.[52] The custom of calling at Amsterdam to fill any remaining cargo space before

[48] Merchandise transported over land is not included and of course the usual reservations concerning the reliability of fiscal sources apply, but tax collector Pieter van Loon, an experienced international merchant and a member of the Board, must have been well informed of the actual values of ships and merchandise. Cross-checking the average prices for four types of commodities, both imported and exported bulk and luxury products (i.e. rice, almonds, herring, and pepper) with the annual aggregate prices in Posthumus, *Nederlandsche prijsgeschiedenis* shows that the estimated value of the commodities in the tax register followed the 1646 prices of the Amsterdam exchange quite closely. In all probability, Van Loon based his estimates on a recent commodity price-list. On Van Loon (1607-1679), see Elias, *De vroedschap*, vol. I, 443.

[49] Of course this source does not contain information on the 'through voyages' or *voorbijlandvaart*, the shipment of goods on Dutch ships which sailed directly from, for example, Danzig to Venice, bypassing Amsterdam completely. See on this type of trade and the source problems it entails, Lesger, *The rise of the Amsterdam market*, 200-202.

[50] NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, fol.10v; 11v-12r.

[51] For example, on 10 and 14 August he consigned two shipments of tar to Jacob Douwesz who was destined for Venice, while his last recorded consignment was on 27 September when he delivered one bale of serge to Pieter Syvertsz, who was sailing to Livorno, NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, fol.26r; 28r; 82v.

[52] NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, 7 August 1646, fol.23v. The register shows how shipping came to a halt in the winter months: no ships arrived between 10 January and 16 March and no goods were registered for export between 28 January and 11 March 1647.

departing for the *Straat* accounts for the much higher number of ships registered leaving for the Mediterranean than returning.[53]

Shipmasters such as Trompetter could be certain to find some extra freight in the busiest port of Europe, especially because merchants preferred to divide their merchandise over a number of ships to spread the risk of damage or loss, caused by privateers or bad weather. This method of decreasing the risks of seaborne trade must have been common practice, but was rarely documented since sub-freighting, dividing goods into smaller lots, was never ratified before a notary.[54] The 1646-1647 register abounds in examples of merchants using this risk-decreasing method: for example, on 21 August 1646 Bento Osorio, a Portuguese Jewish merchant, delivered twenty sacks of pepper for a total value of 2,035 guilders to shipmaster Alewyn Hendricksz to be transported to Venice and thirty sacks of pepper, valued at 6,050 guilders, to Raattje Stoubbe for that same destination. Eight days later, he consigned ten sacks of pepper and one barrel of indigo to Stoubbe (2,465 guilders) and the same amount of pepper and two barrels of indigo (2,900 guilders) to Hendricksz.

This practice was not exclusively used for high-value goods. Merchants sending less valuable commodities to the Mediterranean also used the same method: on 24 July 1646, Willem van Daele delivered two packs of yuft to Harmen Reyersz for the Mediterranean and two packs to Jan Copsse for that same destination. At the end of each month, the ships that had arrived in Amsterdam from the Mediterranean were recorded. For example, in September 1646 the clerks registered that two vessels had sailed in from Venice, one from Livorno, and one from Malaga, as well as two ships without a specific port of departure.[55] The complete cargo of each ship was described in detail: the type, quantity, and value of the goods were determined and it was registered which merchant had paid the 0.5 per cent tax.

Table 3.1 shows that Venice received a substantial part of the Amsterdam export to the Mediterranean and provided a large share of the products sent to the north, making the *Serenissima* one of Amsterdam's main trading contacts in the Mediterranean.

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[53] Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 236. Ninety ships sailed from Amsterdam to the Mediterranean, while only thirty-nine arrivals have been recorded.
[54] Van Tielhof, *The mother of all trades*, 222-223.
[55] NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, fol.85v-96v. The day the ships were recorded is not the day they actually arrived. The time elapsed could vary anywhere between a few weeks and a couple of months, e.g. the ship 'Profeet' had sailed in from the Straits on 29 May, but was registered on 3 September 1646.

Table 3.1 Value of Amsterdam trade per Mediterranean port in percentages, May 1646 - May 1647[56]

Harbour	Import	Export
Venice	22.8	20.0
Livorno	9.4	28.6
Genoa	0.0	21.9
Naples	0.0	3.0
Messina	0.0	1.7
Italy (unspecified)	0.0	2.4
Malaga	21.5	0.0
Malta	0.0	0.2
Marseille	5.1	6.4
Toulon	0.0	0.2
Corfu	0.0	0.3
Crete	0.0	0.1
Straet	41.2	15.2
Total	**100,0**	**100,0%**
Total value in guilders	**2,349,701**	**2,453,148**

Based on: Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 221-226, 355-356

Some reservations must be made regarding the value of imports per harbour: first of all, for more than forty per cent of the incoming cargo no precise harbour of departure was listed. Instead the goods were registered as coming from the 'Straet', a generic designation referring to the whole of the Mediterranean. This renders the total amounts per port given in table 3.1 lower than they actually were. Secondly, the high value of goods arriving in Amsterdam from Malaga is striking, especially compared to the export to this harbour, but this anomaly is probably explained by the fact that Malaga was one of the last ports that ships, which were already partially loaded at other ports, would pass before leaving the Mediterranean. This would also explain the very low import value from the ports of Livorno and Genoa. One other thing that is noteworthy is that Ottoman ports are completely absent: the registered ships have gone no further eastwards than Crete, at this time still a Venetian possession, although already besieged by the Ottomans. Trade with the eastern Mediterranean was not exempted from the tax, but had been greatly reduced in the late

[56] The port registered in the source is not necessarily the only one called at, but probably the main destination or last harbour visited before sailing northwards.

1630s and early 1640s. Just two Netherlandish firms operated in Constantinople in 1640, while Amsterdam merchants complained in 1644 that no ships sailed to or from the Levant and that trade with that region had been completely lost to the English.[57] The information on the merchandise imported from and exported to Venice in 1646-1647 is presented in table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Import and export of goods between Amsterdam and Venice in percentages, May 1646 - May 1647

Commodity category	Import	Export
Grains/crops	32.8	0.1
Dairy/vegetable oil	0.7	6.5
Fish	0.0	3.5
Fruit/vegetables	19.5	0.5
Spices/tobacco	7.9	28.4
Beverages	0.4	0
Textile (raw material)	11,2	0.3
Textile (semi/manufactured goods)	11.1	21.6
Hides/leather	0.4	4.0
Building material	0.5	0
Wood	0	0.9
Metal	0.1	0.6
Metal products	0	1.0
Chemicals/dyes	10.1	28.6
Consumer items	5.3	4.0
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**
Total value in guilders	**536,065**	**489,625**

Source: NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264.

In the first years of the *Straatvaart* finding a profitable return cargo frequently proved difficult. In the early 1590s, fully loaded ships often sailed southward and, because Venice was increasingly suffering from a lack of good merchant vessels, were sold off at the same time as their cargo, while their crew returned home overland. By 1606 more than half the Venetian merchant marine

[57] Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 411, 1075: "die [i.e. trade with the Levant] wij geheel quijt sijn, soodat in veele jaren niet een schip derwaerts gehadt hebben, ofte vandaer herwaerts, hebbende de Engelsche dien handel geheel aen hun getrocken". Many commodities that had been reaching the Netherlands from the Levant were increasingly being imported into Amsterdam either on VOC ships or via Russia, leaving the ports of Alexandria and Aleppo unattractive for Netherlandish merchants, Israel, *Dutch primacy*, 153-154.

was foreign-built.[58] The Amsterdam register shows that in 1646-1647 finding a return cargo was not a problem, since the value of the import from Venice slightly exceeded the export, in contrast with the overall figures for the Mediterranean.[59] The import was dominated by the categories grains/crops, textiles and fruit/vegetables, amounting to more than seventy per cent. The main commodity dominating the import in the product category grains/crops was rice from the Terraferma, which accounted for nearly 33 per cent of the total turnover.[60] The cultivation of rice in northern Italy, especially in the area around Verona, intensified during the seventeenth century as a direct consequence of the famines of the 1590s. Consequently the entire region became less dependent on the import of grain and the export register shows that in 1646-1647 Venice did not need cereals from the North.[61] Instead, considerable amounts of Italian rice were consumed in the Dutch Republic and its hinterland.[62]

The import of textiles produced in Venetian territory or the Levant was also of significance, accounting for some 22 per cent of the total turnover. Manufactured and semi-manufactured fabrics such as silks, camlets,[63] and smaller amounts of velvet and satin cloth were shipped to the Dutch Republic for a total value of almost 118,000 guilders, demonstrating the

[58] Because of the increasing lack of home-built ships, the law forbidding the purchase of foreign ships by Venetians was suspended and between 1591 and 1605 36 ships, mostly from Holland and Zeeland, were bought by Venetians, Lane, "Venetian shipping", 20. Also Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.310; 323; 430; 488; 499; 514; 530; 749; 761; 768; 806; 881; 885; 917; 926.

[59] Just seven ships arrived from Venice in Amsterdam, the average value of their cargo being 76,581 guilders.

[60] Already by 1612, the Netherlanders were exporting rice regularly from Goro, a small harbour just outside the Venetian territory, ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.143, 21 May 1612. Also ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.147, c.11, 13 May 1626, when both the English and Netherlandish merchants requested lower customs duties for the export of different commodities, including rice. On the export of rice, also Sella, *Commerci e industrie*, 87.

[61] The increased cultivation of rice and maize in Southern Europe has been cited as one of the factors causing a declining demand for Baltic grain, which in turn led to a decrease in Dutch shipping and trade with the Baltic during the second half of the seventeenth century, Faber, "The decline of the Baltic grain-trade", esp. 45ff.

[62] Rice was first quoted, albeit irregularly, at the Amsterdam bourse in the 1590s, when it was brought back by the first Netherlandish ships returning from the Mediterranean. It was traded regularly at the exchange from the 1620s, Posthumus, *Nederlandsche prijsgeschiedenis*, 40-41. Part of the rice was destined to be re-exported, for example to Hamburg, North, "The European rice trade", 313-323. Yet the only remaining Amsterdam register of imports and exports shows that in 1667-1668 re-export accounted for less than twenty per cent of the rice imports, Brugmans, "Statistiek". This means that the consumption of rice in the Dutch Republic came into vogue during the seventeenth century. Cf. Van Dillen, *Van rijkdom en regenten*, 413, who states that this occurred only during the eighteenth century.

[63] The camlets or 'turckse greynen' were cloths consisting of a mixture of wool and camel or goat hair. Originally a product from the Levant, they were also produced in the Venetian territory. Almost seventy per cent of the total amount listed in the register of 1646-1647 arrived in Amsterdam via Venice.

vitality of the silk industry of the Veneto.[64] Raw material, in this case raw silk, was imported for roughly the same value.

Fruit and vegetables was the other category making up the bulk of the flow of imports from Venice. Small quantities of Mediterranean commodities like almonds (3.3%), citrus fruit (0.31%), pistachio (0.14%), and pine nuts (0.06%) were shipped to Amsterdam, but currants were the most important merchandise (15.64%). These were cultivated on the Ionian Islands which fell under Venetian dominion. The bulk of currants were re-exported to the rest of northern Europe, especially to England, where they were in great demand.[65] Other foodstuffs were of less importance. Some olive oil was imported, as well as 120 pounds of Parmesan cheese, imported in one consignment by Jan Bocx. At 0.50 guilders a pound, parmesan cheese was roughly five times more expensive than Dutch cheese and a delicacy reserved for those who could afford it. Bocx had evidently acquired a taste for Mediterranean food, because he also imported four small barrels of anchovies, the only quantity of fish arriving from Venice.[66] Small quantities of spices were still imported from Venice, but pepper no longer formed part of the goods going northwards. From Venice, the Amsterdam-based merchants mainly imported aniseed (2.3%) and small amounts of ginger and cumin. Some Cretan wine was imported - one batch of twenty casks valued at 2,000 guilders by David van Gansepoel - as well as some leather and peltry.[67]

The last category of consumer items highlights Venice's role as a production centre of luxury consumables. The city still was an important centre of publishing and printing in the seventeenth century, and among the cargo carried to Amsterdam were batches of books received by Philips Pelt and by the Jewish merchant Israel ben Manasso for sums of 70 guilders and 200 guilders respectively.[68] Another Amsterdam-based merchant, Jan Battista Bentio, not only

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[64] Sella, *Commerci e industrie*, 80-81. On the Terraferma textile industry, see also Demo, *L'anima della città*; Panciera, *L'arte matrice*; Vianello, *Seta fine*. The silk industry in Verona and Vicenza shifted from producing raw silk to manufacturing fabrics intended for export. An estimated 1,000 silk mills operated in Venice and the Terraferma by the late sixteenth century, Molà, *The silk industry*, 305.

[65] Sarti, *Europe at home*, 188: almonds, pistachio nuts, and pine nuts were of importance in the early modern diet because of their high content of oils and calories. On the currant trade, Fusaro, *Uva passa*; Van Dillen, *Van rijkdom en regenten*, 80.

[66] NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, c.129v, 5 October 1646.

[67] NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, c.127r, 2 October 1646. for the 'malvesy' received by Van Gansepoel. Another commodity arriving from Venice was 'hartsteen', a type of stone used as a building material for Amsterdam houses. Imported chemicals and dyes accounted for 9.4 per cent, with mercury being the most prominent (5.47%), followed by smaller quantities of tartar, arsenic, and sulphur.

[68] NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, c.90v, 7 September 1646. No more details are given on the contents of the crates, only the estimated value of the books, but Venice had a thriving Hebrew press, Burke, "Early modern Venice", 400-401.

received commodities like rice, aniseed, and tartar, but he also collected two crates of paintings worth 1,200 guilders and sent one crate of paintings to Venice for 80 guilders.[69] One item was included in the cargo of all ships arriving from Venice: products from the island of Murano, then as now, a standard stop on the itineraries of those visiting Venice. Travellers and tourists bought Murano glassware as souvenirs. Constantijn Huygens, for example, sent a mirror to his mother when he was in Venice in 1620.[70] In 1646-1647 the ships sailing in from Venice brought back drinking glasses, mirrors, and glass beads for a total of 20,180 guilders.

A wide range of Mediterranean products arrived in Amsterdam, but the tax register also shows what was shipped in the opposite direction. As mentioned above, the ships leaving for Venice had hardly any cereals on board and only 9 per cent of the export to the rest of the Mediterranean that year consisted of cereals, indicating that grain prices in southern Europe were stable. Yet one bad harvest could alter the whole composition of the flow of goods, and just one year later poor crops caused starvation among the people in Genoa and the surrounding countryside. High grain prices in the Mediterranean made it once again worthwhile to transport cereals from northern Europe to Italy. On 11 April 1648, the Dutch consul in Genoa reported to the States-General that in the space of just two weeks twenty-three Netherlandish merchantmen had arrived with cereals and beans.[71]

In the years 1646-1647, however, Venice was in need of a different type of goods. The war with the Ottoman Empire over the island of Crete had just started and Venice needed military supplies badly. A series of large shipments of gunpowder, worth over 95,000 guilders, accounted for almost 20 per cent of the total turnover, making the category of chemicals and dyes the one with the highest value. Netherlandish merchants such as Francesco van Axel and Giacomo Stricher were among the main suppliers of the Venetian navy. Other products in this category were mainly dyes like indigo (2.4%), cochenille (1.9%), and madder (0.5%), meant for the textile industry in the city and the Veneto.

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[69] NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, c.30v, 16 August 1646; c.92r, 7 September 1646. The difference in value of the Venetian paintings compared to those shipped from Amsterdam is suggestive, but no more details are given. Certainly at this time sixteenth-century Venetian paintings by artists like Titian, Giorgione, and Veronese were very popular among Amsterdam collectors, cf. Van den Berghe, "Benoorden de Alpen".

[70] Worp, *De briefwisseling*, letter 85, 25 June 1620. Unfortunately, the ship was captured by pirates and all Huygens' souvenirs were lost.

[71] Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 345.

The single product with the highest turnover exported to Venice was pepper, which dominated the category of spices and tobacco.[72] In these years the total amount of pepper shipped to the entire Mediterranean was 1,016,225 pounds.[73] The VOC imported an average of 4.6 million pounds of pepper per year between 1641 and 1656, which means that in 1646-1647 the Mediterranean received nearly a quarter of the annual amount imported by the Dutch from Asia.[74] Venice received 19 per cent (189,405 pounds) of the pepper transported to the Mediterranean and, more than any other product, these shipments of pepper symbolized the city's changed position in international trade. Twenty years earlier, the *Cinque Savi* had decided to lower import taxes on commodities brought in from western ports. The Venetian tariff lists had to be adjusted to better reflect the reality of the market-place: spices, including pepper, but also cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg, were now reclassified as a commodity from the *Ponente* and no longer from the Levant.[75]

The value of textiles shipped to Venice approximated the value of those arriving in Amsterdam. At this time, the cities of Holland - with Leiden in first place - were the most important centres of textile production in the Northern Netherlands. Leiden produced woollen cloths ('laken'), camlets, and says, all of which were in high demand in France, Spain, Italy, and the Levant.[76] Fabrics produced outside the Dutch Republic, for example the says from Hondschoote and 'Osnabruck smaldoeck' were also exported to the south via Amsterdam. The other commodities, roughly 30 per cent, consisted of bees wax (5.9%) for the production of candles, salted and dried salmon, herring and stockfish (3,5%), beans and peas (0,5%), and some wool and flax (0.3%). Furs and yuft, probably from Russia, were sent from Amsterdam to Venice, along with some elephant tusks and deer horn. For the war effort against the Ottomans, fuses and muskets were shipped to the Venetian Republic, together with other, decidedly less martial, products like tobacco pipes and quills.

As mentioned above, the merchant Bentio shipped paintings to and from Venice. The book trade was also a two-way affair between Amsterdam and Venice, with merchants such as

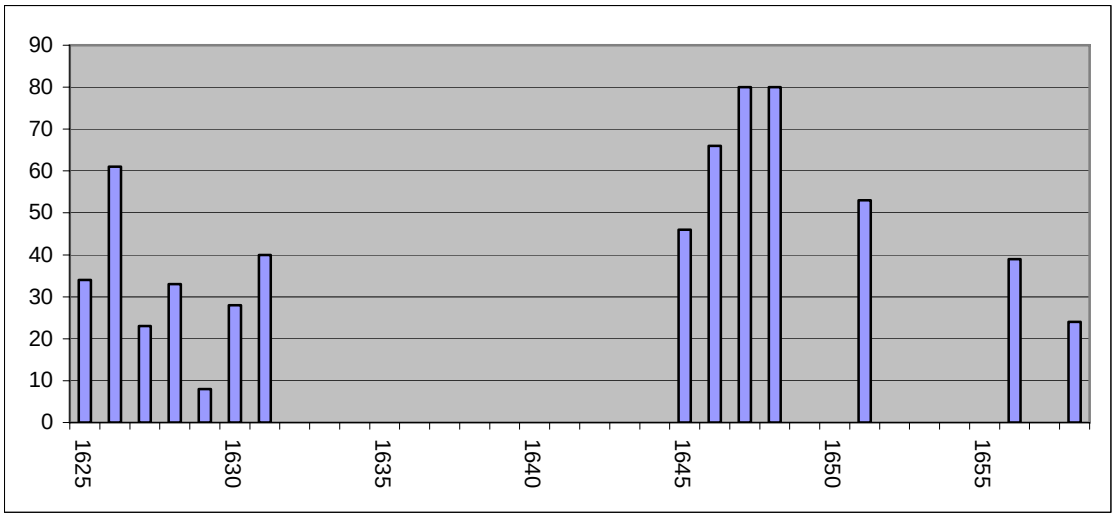
[72] The pepper was valued at 104,185 guilders. This amounted to 21 per cent of the value in this category, with other spices, such as cloves and nutmeg, as well as some sugar and tobacco, accounting for the remaining seven per cent.
[73] Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 296.
[74] For the annual average imported by the VOC between 1641-1656, Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic trade*, 80.
[75] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.147, c.11vff, 13 May 1626. Cf. Luzzato, "La decadenza", 175.
[76] Posthumus' extensive study of the Leiden industry remains fundamental, see Posthumus, *De geschiedenis*, but also Van Dillen, *Van rijkdom en regenten*, Chapter 8; De Vries and Van der Woude, *Nederland 1500-1815*; Noordegraaf, "The new draperies".

the Portuguese Jews Benevista and Duarte Palatio consigning books valued at 340 guilders.[77] One descendant from the famous Elzevier printers family also delivered a sack of books worth 100 guilders to a ship bound for Venice in September 1646.[78] Louis Elzevier had started his own publishing company in Amsterdam after having spent some time travelling through Italy and had obviously established and maintained Italian contacts. Some two weeks later, on 8 and 9 October, he made another consignment, this time consisting of some books destined for Livorno and globes for Naples.[79]

The lack of other sources with comparable data makes it difficult to determine whether 1646-1647 was an average or exceptional year in Netherlandish-Mediterranean trade. Information from a very different tax register can at least help put the traffic intensity between Amsterdam and the Mediterranean in 1646-1647 into perspective. The Board of Levant Trade financed the convoys of merchantmen and warships by levying *lastgeld*, a duty on the volume of cargo on ships sailing to and from the Mediterranean. Unlike the 1646-1647 register, the lastgeld registers do not contain any information on the type, quantity or value of the goods transported, but can serve as an indication of the number of ships involved in Mediterranean trade. The *lastgeld* registers have been preserved for a number of years between 1625 and 1658, and the information is summarized in figure 3.1.

[77] NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, c.22r, 2 August 1646.
[78] NA The Hague, DLH, 1.03.01, no.264, c.77v, 22 September 1646; c.107v, 8 October 1646; c.108r, 9 October 1646.
[79] On Louis Elzevier, Kingma, "Uitgaven met verstrekkende gevolgen", 107-114.

Figure 3.1 Number of ships involved in Amsterdam-Mediterranean trade, 1625-1658*



* The *lastgeldrekeningen* register the ships sailing between summer and spring of the next year. There are no data available for the years 1632-1644, 1649-1651, 1653-1656, and 1658.

Based on: Oldewelt, *De oudste lastgeldrekeningen*, 5; Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 406-414; Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 152.

What immediately becomes apparent is that the number of ships sailing between Amsterdam and the Mediterranean varied greatly and merchants were highly conscious of the unpredictability of traffic intensity. When Amsterdam-based traders were asked in 1634 by the States General how many ships sailed from Amsterdam to Venice, they replied that this was difficult to say since it depended on the Venetian demand for cereals, fish, other foodstuffs, or ammunition, and on the demand for Venetian goods in Amsterdam. Some years, the merchants said, just ten or twelve ships would sail to the south, while in other years it could be twenty or more, but also many fewer.[80] In addition to commercial factors, the insecurity of the sea route also influenced the number of ships sailing to the Mediterranean. On 5 February 1621 consul Ouwercx wrote to the States General that Mediterranean trade was suffering because the competition between the Netherlandish ships made it difficult for them to find sufficient cargoes, but mostly because piracy was increasingly becoming a problem.[81] The slump in 1629, when the above-discussed

[80] "(…) alsoo eenighe jaeren veel ende andere jaeren weynich schepen vaeren naer Venetien, het welck bestaet na den treck in 't cooren als oock in de vis ende vvaste cost, amonitie van oorloge, item na den treck tusschen Venetia ende hier van alderhande waeren, eeniche jaeren thien à twaelff schepen, eenighe jaeren twintich ende meer schepen, oock veele minder, soo dat onseker is", cited by Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 384.

[81] "Die navigatie in de Middellandsche See gaet tegenwoirdlich voor die Neerlansche reders schaedelijck, alsoo overal die vraachten seer sober ende bederven sijnen door die groete quantiteyt van scheepen: ende door die

proposal for a 'compagnie van assurantie' was put forward, was caused by increased risks.[82] At that time Spanish embargoes again made trade and shipping in the Mediterranean difficult, while Ottoman pirates posed such a danger that insurance costs greatly increased and merchants preferred to send luxury products by the safer land routes, a practice which shall be discussed below.[83]

During the second half of the 1640s more ships sailed for the Mediterranean. Certainly some recent developments facilitated Netherlandish shipping in the Mediterranean, while the competition was facing problems: Dunkirk had fallen to the French in 1646, ridding the Netherlandish merchantmen of the Dunkirk privateers who had been harassing them since the beginning of the war against Spain.[84] The English had been dominant in the trade with the Ottoman Empire since the 1620s, but saw their share dwindling because of the turmoil caused by the Civil War.[85] In the Mediterranean, the Venetian-Ottoman war over Crete further reduced Venetian commerce with the Levant and it made the city even more dependent on shipping services and trade from others. Venice needed supplies, whether war materials or pepper, and it needed an outlet for its fine-cloth production, now that the Ottoman Empire was no longer an option.[86] Taking all of these developments into consideration, the twelve months covered by the tax register were a period of relatively intensive maritime trade between Amsterdam and Venice, which will have benefited the Netherlandish merchants in the lagoon.

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menichte van de zeerovers, die daegelijcx mier ende mier tenemen, sijnen de perijckelen seer groeter als voor desen", in Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 74-75. Privateering was an accepted wartime method, aimed at damaging the adversary's trade and during the great confrontations between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires, which lasted for most of the sixteenth century, Christian ships preyed upon Muslim vessels, and vice versa. But the lines of demarcation became increasingly blurred after Lepanto (1571), and corsairing became more and more indiscriminate. Economic motives outweighed religious and political differences; for Malta and the Barbary states piracy was the main source of income, while for many northern European merchant vessels corsairing was just another way of making some extra profit, Fontenay, "Course", 87; Greene, "Beyond the northern invasion", 55.

[82] See above, p.67.

[83] Blok, "Koopmansadviezen", 60-61.

[84] Baetens, *De nazomer*, 75; also Israel, *Dutch primacy*, 198.

[85] Ibidem, 200-203.

[86] Ibidem, 204.

Continuing overland trade

Focusing exclusively on maritime trade would not explain why a large number of Netherlandish merchants chose to settle in Venice. Rival ports like Marseille and Livorno were located in the western part of the Mediterranean, and much easier to reach for merchantmen sailing in from the Straits. To reach the Venetian lagoon, ships had to travel all the way up the Adriatic Gulf, which increased the duration of their voyage significantly. But one of the strengths of Venice had always been that the city lay at the crossroads of maritime and terrestrial routes. The eastern roads through the Alps lay within easy reach: the main thoroughfare used the Brenner pass, which led to Augsburg, Ulm, and further north to Nuremberg, Frankfurt, Cologne and the Low Countries. More to the east, a road passed the Alps at Tarvisio and then went on towards Salzburg.[87] The changes in commercial relations between North and South during the final decade of the sixteenth century also had a significant impact on the overland routes. When Giorgio Giustinian, the Venetian ambassador in London between January 1606 and November 1608, returned to Venice, he took the land route via Augsburg and Bassano. In his report to the Senate, Giustinian also described his homeward journey, pointing out that the inhabitants of the Brenta valley were suffering from the declining commerce between Venice and Augsburg since Levantine products such as cotton were now exported from the Mediterranean on Netherlandish ships and were reaching the German cities from the North.[88]

The continental trade routes had for centuries been one of the mainstays of Venetian commerce and the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* was the most concrete testimony of these flowering trade relations. But commerce in the *Fondaco* had started to decline as well since Netherlandish trade with Venice had started. The *Cinque Savi* remarked in 1607 that German trade in Venice was not nearly as extensive as it once had been.[89] A few years later, the envoy sent to Venice by the Protestant Union, a coalition of German Protestant states formed in 1608, established that customs revenues from the *Fondaco* in good years had amounted to more than 140,000 *crowns* a

[87] Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice*, 120.
[88] Blok, *Relazioni veneziane*, 23-24: "Questo passo [at Bassano] soleva per il passato esser molto frequentato dal transito de mercantie e particolarmente de cottoni, che andavano in Alemagna; ma hora è molto cessato, poichè per la navigatione de Olandesi ne va in Augusta, che per li fustagni ne consuma la maggior quantità, una grandissima parte, da che procedendo anche la povertà degli habitanti di questo luogo è molto grande, perchè con l'occasione di qual transito cavavano molto utile dalle condotte".
[89] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.141, c.191v, 16 January 1606 (m.v.): "(...) ma non tanti di gran lunga come soleva".

year, but had been falling ever since the Netherlanders had arrived, plummeting to no more than 40,000 *crowns* in 1609, at the start of the Twelve Years' Truce.[90]

Yet even though the increasing success of the maritime trade routes seriously affected German-Venetian commerce, the overland trade connections between northern Italy and the Low Countries continued to be of importance. The Netherlanders in Venice persisted in sending goods via the land routes, even after the start of the *Straatvaart*, a fact not reflected in existing historiography. This discrepancy can partly be explained by the large amount of attention which the sudden start of maritime trade has attracted and partly by an imbalance in the sources. The collection of Venetian notarial records by Brulez and Devos holds relatively few traces of Netherlandish merchants engaged in the overland trade, even though before the 1590s this had been the foundation of sixteenth-century commerce between Venice and Antwerp. Overland transport had become more efficient in the sixteenth century, with the large transport firms offering guarantees for safe delivery, making it unnecessary to register each transaction with a notary.[91] Seaborne transport was much riskier, with unpredictable weather, piracy, and dangerous coastlines posing a permanent threat. The bulk of Venetian notarial records therefore concern the settlement of maritime insurance claims after damage or loss of goods and ships.[92] This abundance, however, can cause an overestimation of the share of maritime trade in relation to terrestrial commerce, while also obscuring the fact that sea and land routes were often interdependent.[93]

One of the few notarial records relating to overland transport illustrates that for certain valuable products, transport by water over even a relatively short distance could have disastrous results. In 1607, Balthasar Charles received a valuable consignment of Antwerp tapestries that had suffered considerable water damage during shipment across the Lago Maggiore, against his express orders that they be transported by land.[94] The risks connected to transport by water for

[90] Report by the agent Johann Baptist Lenk in November 1610, as cited by Kellenbenz, "Le déclin", 119.
[91] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, xxx-xxxi.
[92] Tenenti, *Naufrages*, passim, which is based on maritime insurance agreements from the documents of the same two Venetian notaries used by Brulez and Devos.
[93] On the interdependence of maritime and land routes, Kellenbenz, "Unternehmerkrafte", 48 and Lanaro Santori, "Venezia e le grandi arterie". Cf. Heers, "Rivalité ou collaboration". On the relative attractiveness of continental over maritime trade routes in medieval and early modern Europe, Munro, "The 'New Institutional Economics'".
[94] Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2105. The Charles family, based in Antwerp and Venice, counted four members named Balthasar, who were active in Venice in the space of three generations: Balthasar senior (?-1603) had two sons, Balthasar junior (?-1603) and Gasparo, who in turn had a son called Balthasar. To further complicate matters, Balthasar senior had a brother in Antwerp named Gaspar, who also named his son Balthasar. The Balthasar receiving tapestries from Antwerp is either the son of Gaspar or of Gasparo.

certain vulnerable goods, especially textiles, caused the Netherlandish merchants in Venice to continue to use the continental route, long after maritime trade routes had become an integral part of their activities.

The petitions submitted by the Netherkanders to the Venetian government show that they continued to ask for trade privileges concerning traffic through German lands while at the same time trying to gain favourable conditions for their maritime commerce.[95] This was the case in 1598, when Netherlandish merchants asked for lower customs duties for goods they imported overland from the Low Countries.[96] The *Cinque Savi* discussed this request at length and their recommendation to the Senate provides much information. The *Savi* stated that large quantities of Netherlandish goods arrived at the fairs of Bolzano and that even though most important Netherlandish firms were represented in Venice, almost all goods went to cities like Milan, Mantua, Florence or Ferrara because of high Venetian customs duties. Only very small quantities were brought to Venice, although they did suspect that the merchants smuggled more into Venetian territory, evading not only the customs offices but also the *Sanità*, with obvious dangers for public health. The *Cinque Savi* advised a reduction of customs duties for a period of three years, hoping this would bring in at least 1000 more bales of unspecified goods.[97] Despite the *Savi*'s report, the Senate decided against lowering the customs duties. Yet the Netherlandish merchants did not give up and an identical proposal was discussed again in August of the same year, and again on 15 January 1600, when the *governatore* of the export customs office declared that no Netherlandish textiles had passed through Venice in the preceding two years.[98]

Up north, in the city of Amsterdam, merchants also endeavoured to lower the costs of sending merchandise through Germany to Italy. In 1598, taking advantage of the fact that Stadholder Maurits had retaken Deventer, they requested lower export tariffs for goods (fabrics produced in the Dutch Republic, as well as in Lille, Tournai, and England) sent via this city to southern Germany and Italy. That way they would not have to ship their merchandise first to the neutral harbour of Hamburg, before dispatching it southwards. Among the petitioners were

[95] Petitions submitted by the Netherlandish merchants as a collective shall be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.
[96] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.140, c.11v-13v, 26 May 1598; c.11v-13v, 26 May 1598; c.23r, 26 August 1598.
[97] The new tariffs would apply to a cross-section of Netherlandish textile products, both coarse and fine: *ferrandene* (silk fabrics mixed with wool or cotton), *grograni* (woolen fabric mixed with silk or cotton, in the Low Countries mainly produced in Lille), *scotti et sarze* (serges from Hondschoote, hence the name), fine linen (*cambrai*), as well as table cloths and napkins.
[98] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.140, c.70v, 15 January 1599 (m.v.).

members of the merchant families Nicquet, Reijnst, Quinget, and Van Uffelen, who all had relatives stationed in Venice.[99]

The Netherlandish merchants in Venice also transported fabrics in the opposite direction, sending products from the manufacturing centres in the Veneto to the Low Countries, often via Cologne or other German cities where they also had business partners.[100] Yet the petitions submitted by the Netherlandish merchants and the subsequent deliberations of the *Cinque Savi* show that one of their main concerns during the first half of the seventeenth century was the duty-free export of raw silk from Syria (*soriane*) by land, a privilege for which the Netherlandish merchants had first petitioned in 1614.[101] There was little demand for this type of silk in Venice and what arrived from the Levant was mainly meant for re-export. The *Cinque Savi* advised the Senate to grant this privilege. They hoped that the loss of export customs duties would be compensated for by an increased import of raw silk from the eastern Mediterranean, which would give Venice greater import customs revenues and divert trade from Venice's rival, Marseille. The Senate did grant this request, but stipulated that all raw silk had to be transported via the Pontebba pass on the border between the Carnic and Julian Alps, which was an area so secluded and cut off from any traffic that there was no risk that the Netherlandish merchants would secretly sell the tax-free silk in Venetian territory.[102]

Thirteen years later, the *Cinque Savi* complained that the Netherlandish merchants had continuously tried to and finally succeeded in stretching the awarded privileges: first, in 1620, they had asked permission to send some bales which were late for the Frankfurt fairs, not via Pontebba but via the shorter road of Augusta. This request was granted, so the next year they were back and asked to be allowed to send the silk also via Basel, and then, in 1624, to have access to every road leading north from Venice. Before conceding again, the *Cinque Savi* first wished to determine whether the tax exemption had actually had the anticipated effect of stimulating the import of Levantine silk. To their surprise a comparison of the years 1610-1614 and 1624-1626 showed that during that latter period the export of raw silk from Venetian territory exceeded the import, which meant that instead of increasing the trade with the Levant, the

[99] Gemeentearchief Deventer, 595, 1598. I would like to thank Clé Lesger for providing me with this information.
[100] Vianello, *Seta fine*, 111-112: silk merchants in Bassano were in contact with merchants in Amsterdam during the seventeenth century. Also Kellenbenz, "Le déclin".
[101] ASV, VSM, Risposte, 30 June 1627.
[102] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.147, c.118ff, 30 June 1627.

Netherlandish merchants had succeeded in exporting significant quantities of *nostrane* (i.e. from Venetian territory) silk without paying the necessary taxes.

The *Savi* were not overly concerned but stated that the disappointing import volume was caused by the large number of ships lost in 1614, and because the war between Persia and the Ottomans had blocked the flow of raw silk to the Levantine coasts. They were quite optimistic for better results in the future, and claimed that during the first months of 1627 already 477 bales had arrived, while also pointing out that import and export figures needed to be treated with due caution. More importantly perhaps, in their report to the Senate they stressed that denying this request would carry the risk that foreign merchants would leave Venice and settle in Livorno, a threat the Netherlanders regularly used to add weight to their petitions.[103] The *Savi* added that they did advocate strict surveillance to make sure that silks would not be sold in Milan or anywhere else, and it appears that this time the proposal was adopted.[104]

Even though the trans-Alpine routes were considered the safest, political developments could seriously hinder and even interrupt overland commerce. Just one year later, in 1628, two Netherlandish merchants, Luca van Uffelen and Giovanni van Mere, submitted a petition to have the export *dazio* waived, so that they could ship silk fabrics overseas. They explained they had been given orders by their principals in London not to send silks from Verona by land because of the existing dangers.[105] The dangers Van Uffelen and Van Mere alluded to stemmed from the Thirty Years' War. Started in 1618, the war became especially damaging to the German trading cities during the late 1620s and 1630s.[106] The once-flowering trading centre of Augsburg never completely recovered from the invasion of Swedish troops in 1632, and while Nuremberg seems to have suffered slightly less, the clashes between Gustav Adolf II, king of Sweden, and Albrecht von Wallenstein, leader of the Imperial army, were especially damaging in the late 1620s.[107] The level of trade between Cologne and Venice was severely reduced during these decades, and in Frankfurt commercial activity was so reduced that no rates of exchange were quoted between 1631 and 1638.[108] The paralysis of the trading centres in southern Germany and the military threat during these years made the sea route an attractive alternative for merchants operating from

[103] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.147, c.121v, 30 June 1627.
[104] ASV, CRD, 20 January 1629 (m.v.).
[105] ASV, CRD, 16 February 1627 (m.v.).
[106] Kamen, "The economic and social consequences", 47-50.
[107] Kellenbenz, "Le déclin", 136-137, 147.
[108] Quite a large number of international merchants, often involved in the trade with Venice, went bankrupt during these years, Kellenbenz, "Le déclin", 154.

Venice and other Italian cities. For years, the Netherlandish firm De Groote had exported Neapolitan silk by land, but after 1626 it chose transport by ship, just as it chose to send English cloth and says from Antwerp by sea to the south.[109] In Amsterdam, merchants in 1629 stated that the level of overland trade between the Low Countries and Italy had been reduced and would have been more prosperous had there been peace in Germany.[110]

By 1632, the Netherlandish merchants in Venice once more petitioned to have the export privileges for silk extended. They wished to be granted duty-free export for both the land and the sea routes, which would allow them to choose according to the prevailing military situation. In their request they explained that the risk of losing their goods had become so great that merchants had been holding on to their stocks, afraid to send anything via Germany. The continuing war meant that they had to fall back on the sea route.[111] Not only were they concerned for their export of raw silk, but their trade in silk fabrics from the Venetian mainland suffered as well. They also requested the export by sea of products from Verona, Vicenza, and Bassano. Their petition was granted, with the *Cinque Savi* expressing the hope it would stimulate the Venetian silk industry and draw more shipping and trade, which had been greatly damaged during the plague epidemic of 1629-1631.[112] This particular privilege was renewed in 1634 and in 1640, as the pressure of the Thirty Years' War on the Alpine passes and German trade routes persisted.[113]

Once Netherlandish maritime trade with Venice started in the final decade of the sixteenth century, the Netherlandish merchants quickly expanded the assortment of commodities they shipped to Venice, furnishing the city-state with essential supplies ranging from grain to gunpowder, and from salted fish to pepper. By 1607 the *Cinque Savi* had to admit that the Netherlanders had become the merchants who contributed most to trade and shipping, and who connected Venice with the commerce of Amsterdam, Moscovy, Danzig, and England. Not only

[109] Baetens, *De nazomer*, 84-85; Vianello, *Seta fine*, 65; Parker, *The Thirty Years' War*, 134.
[110] Blok, "Koopmansadviezen", 13: "Daer gaen veel coopmanschappen van hier over landt naer Italien, ende van aldaer hier te lande, ende noch meer als Dutschlandt in vreede was".
[111] ASV, CRD, 4 August 1632. They stated that this would "riuscendo di nostro maggior commodo et vantaggio di mandarle per via di terra, rispetto alle grosse sicurtà per mare".
[112] ASV, CRD, 23 September 1632. This decision in turn caused the tax collector for the export customs to submit a petition the next month, in which he claimed that without the income from the export duties on silk and silk fabrics he could not make ends meet. He had acquired the 'appalto' at the beginning of 1632, at a price of 2,100 ducats per year. Now he was left with hardly any income and asked to have his financial burden reduced, ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.149, c.5v-8r, 17 August 1632.
[113] ASV, CRD, 1 March 1640, with a reply from the *Cinque Savi* two weeks later, see ASV, VSM, Risposte, 13 March 1640. The resistance the merchants encountered in 1640 is discussed in Chapter 5, 135-136.

did they form Venice's link with the northern world, they were also actively involved in the export of all types of Levantine goods.[114] Acknowledging that Venice was facing great difficulties, the *Savi* even recommended that their republic follow the example of the Netherlanders, who had successfully withstood Spain by expanding their trade and shipping.[115]

The changes in the scope and character of their trade also gave the Netherlanders an advantage over other immigrant merchants in Venice. The Netherlandish exploitation of the maritime trade routes delivered a blow to the commerce of the South German merchants, causing a decline in the *Fondaco*'s activity. With regard to the two other groups of foreign merchants with contacts in the Atlantic trading centres, it was the Netherlanders' ability to combine both the overseas and the continental trade routes which set them apart. The English in Venice were to a certain extent involved in the same types of trade, such as the import of salted fish, but their main focus was on the export of currants. They largely left the export of Levantine commodities to England to their colleagues of the Levant Company in Ottoman ports.[116] The Portuguese traded in a comparable variety of western and Levantine goods, while also being involved in commerce with the Iberian peninsula.[117] Yet neither of these groups held a significant stake in the overland trade between Venice and the North.

The Netherlanders, on the other hand, could export Levantine and Veneto textiles either by land or by sea. Combining both continental and maritime commerce enabled the Netherlandish merchants to substitute one route for the other if risks became too high, giving them much needed versatility at a time when war frequently threatened trade. While the maritime route was used when transport via the German lands became too dangerous because of the Thirty Years' War, the situation was reversed during the first Anglo-Dutch War (1652-1654), when merchants preferred to send their goods to Italy by land.[118] The broad range of commodities and trade routes gave them their strong position on the Venetian marketplace, a position they

[114] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.141, 16 January 1606 (m.v.), c.192r-192v: "La nation fiamenga al presente fa grossissimi facenda et si puo dir, che ella piu di tutte le altre [nationi] facci fiorir il negotio in questa città per la navigazione de Astradan, Moscovia, Danzica, et Inghilterra per la molta quantità di vasselli suoi, che fanno capitar a Venetia con molte merci, et con formenti, et altre loro nove inventioni di polvere, canevi, et altre sorte diverse, che estrareno da quelle porti. Questa attende a tutte le merci, che vengono di Levante".
[115] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.141, 16 January 1606 (m.v.), c.193v: "havendo una ardentissima guerra con il Re di Spagna, solamente con la navigatione, et con il negotio si vanno sustenando, et mantenendo cosi longamente con accrescimento di reputatione del mondo et de ricchezze nel publico, et nel particolare".
[116] Fusaro, "The English mercantile community", 36-37; Fusaro, *Uva passa*, passim.
[117] Ruspio argues that the Portuguese in Venice formed the main link with the Spanish financial circuit and supplied the Venetian textile industry with Spanish wool, Ruspio, "La presenza portoghese", 234-235.
[118] Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 151.

blatantly used to gain certain concessions from the authorities, who were aware that Venice had come to rely heavily on these traders for the viability of its *piazza*.

Not all Netherlandish merchants, however, possessed the necessary experience or contacts to make their fortune in Venice. Cornelis Jansen's court case dragged on until the summer of 1606, but in the end the testimonies of his fellow passengers and the resident Netherlandish merchants did tip the balance in his favour: the appeal was granted and the initial sentence was annulled.[119] It is not even clear whether Jansen himself waited for the final decision of the Council of Forty. He disappears from sight, probably disheartened by the whole experience. The next chapter deals with those Netherlandish merchants who did settle in Venice, examing in closer detail their number, origins, mutual business and social relations, as well as their religious affiliation.

[119] ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5, c.21v.

Chapter 4. The community of Netherlandish merchants in Venice

The number of Netherlandish merchants in Venice

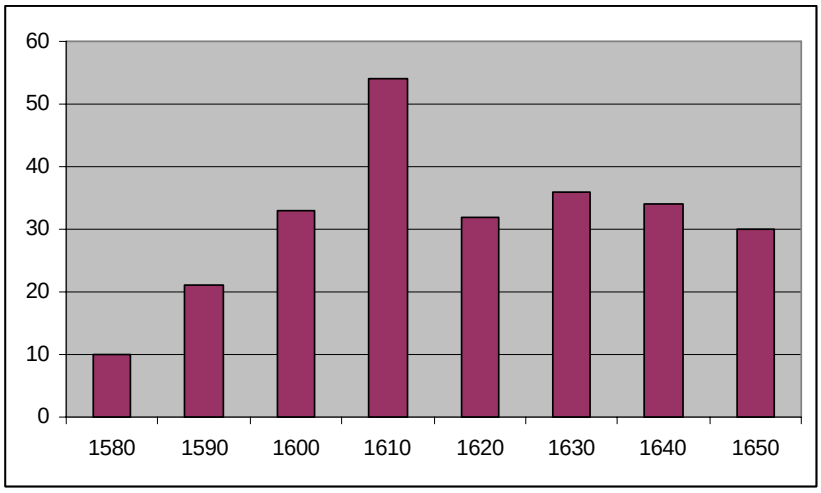
The present chapter looks at the way the changes in trade relations influenced the numerical presence of Netherlandish traders, while also investigating the nature of the merchants' shared ethnic origins, marriage bonds, economic ties, and religious affiliations. No registers of the Venetian authorities listing the number of Netherlandish merchants exist and the *nazione fiamminga* has left no records such as members' lists. Indirect evidence, however, can help ascertain the number of Netherlanders active in Venice during this period. The names of the majority of Netherlandish merchants conducting trade in Venice appear in notarial records, even though not all commercial transactions were necessarily registered with a Venetian notary or authenticated in any way. Yet an early modern merchant could not trade over long distances without regularly granting powers of attorney to somebody to act in his place. Commercial disputes were preferably resolved out of court through arbitration by fellow merchants, and insurance claims needed to be settled when goods were damaged or an entire ship was wrecked. The impressive amount of notarial records mentioning Netherlandish merchants collected by Brulez and Devos for the period 1568-1621 shows that whether for powers of attorney, arbitration, renting a house, drawing up a marriage contract or a last will, the Netherlandish merchants in Venice had to turn to a Venetian notary regularly.

In general, sixty-six notaries were operative in Venice at all time, but only a small number specialized in mercantile affairs. These notaries' offices could be found in the proximity of Rialto. Some notaries catered to a large foreign clientele, often because they paired extensive knowledge of international trade with a command of foreign languages. The Netherlandish merchants preferred certain notaries, especially Giovanni Andrea Catti, who was active between 1577 and 1621, Andrea Spinelli, active between 1591 and 1619, and Giovanni Maria Piccini, active between 1618 and 1650. Piccini was specialized in 'Ponentine' trade and was also frequented by many Portuguese merchants.[1] The merchants often also called on these notaries to

[1] Pedani Fabris, *Veneta auctoritate notarius*, 141. Brulez and Devos examined the records of four Venetian notaries: Antonio Callegarini (1566-1604), Pietro Partenio (1563-1618), Catti, and Spinelli; Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I; Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II. For an extensive description of the various types of notarial records, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, xxvii-xxxvi.

draw up their wills, sometimes even bequeathing them with a legacy. Gasparo della Faille, for instance, left twenty-five ducats to Piccini, as his notary and trusted friend.[2] Samples of notarial records taken at intervals of ten years reveal the development of the population of Netherlandish merchants resident in Venice as trade relations, described in Chapter 2 and 3, took on a different form (See figure 4.1).[3]

Figure 4.1 Number of Netherlandish merchants in Venice in eight sample years in the period 1580-1650



Source: notarial records Catti, Spinelli, and Piccini[4]

For the eight sample years a total of 161 different merchants can be found, but it has to be emphasized that the actual number of residing traders was probably higher. A large part of the merchants (51) materialize only in a single year, while others continue to be noted ten, twenty,

[2] ASV, NT, b.756-758, with bequests to Piccini in, for example, b.757, 14 November 1629. See also the last will of Adolfo van Axel, ASV, NT, b.757, 3 January 1636 (m.v.).

[3] The material collected by Brulez and Devos has been used here to determine the number of Netherlandish merchants in the years 1580, 1590, 1600, 1610, and 1620. Catti's *studio* was taken over by Piccini in 1621 and his registers have been used to complete the cross section for the years 1630, 1640 and 1650. The names of the Netherlandish traders residing in Venice in these years are collected in Annex A.

[4] It must be taken into account that Andrea Spinelli died in 1619, which means that for the year 1620 only Giovanni Andrea Catti was active. Giovanni Piccini had just started his career in 1618 and would take over from Catti only three years later. To see whether or not a decrease in the number of merchants set in after 1610, the year 1615 has also been studied. This resulted in a group of 44 merchants, certainly fewer than in 1610, but still more than double the number of merchants in 1590 and also significantly more than in 1620. Of these 44 merchants, nine did not turn up in the other sample years. Five figured only once, probably indicating that they either were in Venice only for a short period of time, or held a minor role as an apprentice. The other four merchants were all part of firms or families featuring in the other selected years. This pattern indicates that sampling at ten-year intervals provides quite reasonable coverage of the names of Netherlandish merchants in Venice.

and even thirty years after their first appearance in the archives. Martin Hureau, for example, was born in Antwerp in 1575 and moved to Venice in 1599 to work as *giovane* (apprentice) for his uncle, Pietro Pellicorno. After Pellicorno's death in 1607, Hureau and his cousin Alvise du Bois, who had also been Pellicorno's apprentice, continued the firm.[5] Hureau appears once in the notarial records in 160, when he was still in the service of his uncle. In the next sample years he registers an increasing amount of records with the Venetian notaries: in 1610 he is mentioned 13 times, ten years later 17 times, while in 1630, the year of his death, he appeared in 27 different notarial records. Other Netherlanders, such as Daniel Nijs, Matteo van Loosen, Stefano van Neste, and Marco Moens, also resided in the city for periods of more than three decades, showing that Venice was not just a foreign harbour where apprentices could learn the trade, but a place where the merchants settled for a lengthy or even lifelong stay.[6] This continuity contrasts with the pattern of English traders, who usually seem to have stayed for much shorter periods.[7]

The sample years show quite clearly how with the start of intensive maritime trade relations between Venice and the Netherlands the number of resident merchants increased. With the first grain ships in 1590 arrived more merchants, keen to take advantage of this newly opened trade route. They joined the already existing nucleus of Netherlandish merchants in Venice, quickly more than doubling their numbers. This becomes clear when earlier notarial records are taken into account: in 1580 no more than ten different merchants from the Netherlands were mentioned. Five years later their number was still the same.[8] These were the traders involved in the traditional Venetian-Antwerp overland trade in textiles.

The increasing importance of Netherlandish merchants, both numerically and economically, from 1590 onward is reflected in the advice given by the *nazione fiamminga* in 1596.[9] When the Senate consulted the most important merchants of the *piazza* on the foundation of a new state bank, eighteen individual merchants and three firms - consisting of two merchants each - signed the advice of the Netherlandish community. Assuming that all members of the

[5] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.903; 1104; 1338; 1464; Baetens, *De nazomer*, vol. I, 186-187.
[6] Nijs, Van Loosen, and Van Neste were all present in Venice in the selected years between 1590 and 1630, De Wale and Moens from 1610 until 1650. The latter lived in Venice until his death at the age of 74 in 1664, a sign that Netherlandish merchants did not disappear from Venice after 1650, ASV, NT, b.936, 18 February 1663 (m.v.).
[7] Fusaro, "The English mercantile community", 39.
[8] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.20; 22-26; 112-123; 125-127; 129.
[9] ASV, ST, f.141.

firms were present at the time, twenty-four merchants were active in 1596.[10] By 1600, the notarial records show that no fewer than thirty Netherlanders traded in Venice.

The number of Netherlandish merchants peaked at 54 in 1610. This might indicate the intensification of Venetian-Netherlandish trade relations, facilitated by the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621), which halted the war in the Netherlands. After 1610, the number of Netherlandish merchants in the notarial records declines to 32 in 1620. Although a change in the mere number of merchants does not necessarily reflect the state of their trade, internal and external changes certainly made Venice less attractive compared to rival ports like Marseille or Livorno.[11] In fact, in 1610 the Senate rejected a proposal to open up direct trade between Venice and the Levant to foreign merchants. The Netherlanders ardently supported the proposal and one of them, Giovanni de Barlamont, explained in a letter to the Senate that depending on their decision the traders would choose whether to use Venice or Marseille as port of transshipment for Levantine goods.[12] Two years later, the Dutch Republic for the first time sent an ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Commerce with the Ottoman ports had increased during the last decade of the sixteenth century and the ambassador Cornelis Haga was given the task of negotiating trade privileges with the sultan.[13] These were granted in March 1612 and gave traders a firmer foothold in the Levant with greater security and lower costs, which reduced the need to use Venice as a place to buy Levantine products or as a transit port for northern goods.

In 1630, 36 different merchants were mentioned in the notarial records. The plague epidemic of 1629-1631 had severely interrupted daily life; roughly one third of Venice's population fell victim to the disease, while others sought refuge outside the city, and commerce came to a standstill. Workers in the Venetian woollen industry complained of poverty because merchants had ceased to provide them with work as a result of the plague, and when a Venetian

[10] The notarial records show that more Netherlandish merchants were present in Venice than signed the 1596 advice, but it would seem that these twenty-four were among the most important to give their opinion on this matter, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, xix-xx. This indicates that the notarial records give a reasonably good idea of the total number of merchants. In comparison, thirty-five Venetian merchants responded to the Senate's request, together with seventeen Florentine merchants and nine from Genoa. The advice of the German merchants was not signed by individual merchants.

[11] Cf. Bratchel, "Italian merchant organization", 30, who warns against associating declining numbers of Italian merchants present in London during the second half of the sixteenth century with a diminishing Italian involvement in English trade, pointing instead to changes in their business organization, like the more frequent use of commission agents.

[12] ASV, SM, f.187, letter dated 14 May 1610. De Barlamont was in Antwerp at that moment. For more on the 1610 proposal, see below, Chapter 5, 134-136.

[13] Bulut, *Ottoman-Dutch economic relations*, 116-120; Israel, *Dutch primacy*, 97-98.

trading house had to declare bankruptcy in 1631, three-quarters of its creditors, including many Netherlanders, were residing outside the city because of the disease.[14] A number of Netherlandish merchants also died in these years, for instance Melchior Noirot and Gasparo della Faille in 1629, Hureau in 1630, and Giovanni van Mere in 1631.[15] Despite the epidemic and the worsening economic climate, after 1630 the number of Netherlandish traders remained more or less stable, arriving at 34 merchants in 1640 and thirty in 1650. In subsequent years the Venetian-Ottoman conflict over Crete hindered trade, while piracy in the Mediterranean increased risks and costs. Still, this did not deter some Netherlandish merchants from continuing their trade in Venice or setting up house there after 1650.[16]

In comparison, when the Netherlandish-German nation was first established in Livorno in 1622, 21 Netherlandish merchants signed up as members. Although precise numbers are lacking, it seems that the number of traders increased during the first half of the seventeenth century. In 1615, the Netherlanders, including the merchants' families, their personnel, sailors and craftsmen, numbered around a hundred, but by 1635 they had doubled in size.[17] In Genoa, only seventeen merchants from the Low Countries were present between 1590 and 1635, and the number of resident Netherlanders fluctuated greatly. In 1627, there were no merchants at all.[18]

Compared to other immigrant traders in Venice, the Netherlanders were a small group. In Venice, the Greeks formed the largest community of foreigners, numbering approximately 4,000 to 5,000 during the last decades of the sixteenth century. Most came from the areas under Venetian rule, which meant that they were officially Venetian subjects, or from those parts of Venice's dominions that had been conquered by the Ottomans.[19] Many of the Greeks worked in the maritime sector, as sailors, in the Venetian Arsenal or as merchants, mainly trading with the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. An estimated 28 per cent of the Greeks made a living in trade, either local or overseas.[20] The large community of Germans living in Venice contained

[14] ASV, CRD, b.21, 16 November 1630; ASV, CRD, b.21, 16 January 1630 (m.v.). Also Tucci, "I listini", 18.
[15] See their testaments in ASV, NT, b.756.
[16] The years after 1650 go beyond the scope of this study, but even though Venice might have become a less vibrant port, merchants from the Netherlands continued to live and trade in the city. For example Marco Moens, Francesco van Axel, Abraham van Collen, Giovanni Druijvestein, and Giusto van Eijch, who died in Venice in 1663, 1665, 1675, 1683, and 1688 respectively, see their testaments in ASV, NT, b.757.
[17] Veluwenkamp, "Merchant colonies", 157.
[18] Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 119-122; Hoogewerff, "De Nederlandsch-Duitsche gemeente", 157, 163. A handful of Netherlanders also resided in Naples and Messina.
[19] Fedalto, "Stranieri a Venezia", 254.
[20] Ersie Burke, who is working on a book on the Greek community in early modern Venice, kindly provided me with this information. See also Thiriet, "Sur les communautés grecque", 219; Fedalto, "Le minoranze straniere", 147-149.

many artisans, especially bakers, as well as merchants.[21] In 1580, some 900 Germans were living in the city, including some hundred merchants living in the *Fondaco*.[22] Both the Greeks and the Germans had been present in Venice for centuries and had arrived when the *Serenissima* was at the height of its power. They outnumbered the Netherlanders, but neither the Greek nor the German traders had a large stake in the newly developed trade routes between Venice and northern Europe. The English merchants, like the Netherlanders engaged in overseas trade, show a very different pattern of settlement, with only about twenty English traders staying in the city during the first half of the seventeenth century, usually only for short periods of time. Since the main interest of the English was the trade in currants from the Ionian Islands under Venetian rule, they preferred to collaborate with Greeks within the Venetian dominions, instead of forming a large mercantile community in Venice. This allowed them to evade Venetian export restrictions.[23] A small number of English merchants - fewer than a dozen - also resided on Zante and Cephalonia.

Just as in Livorno, other compatriots congregated around the nucleus of Netherlandish merchants in Venice. The traders frequently shared their houses with business partners and their families. In Venice, most household personnel came from the Venetian Terraferma, Friuli, Lombardy, Dalmatia, or Albania. Only rarely did servants come from beyond the Alps, but the Netherlandish traders often employed compatriots as staff.[24] The testament of one of these household servants, Giacomina van der Beche (Beke), employed in the Van Castre home, offers a glimpse of the close network that existed between personnel in different Netherlandish households. When making her will in 1605 she left the bulk of her belongings to the wife and children of the merchant Francesco van Eecren. Smaller sums of money went to another servant in the Van Castre house, to the children of a servant in the household of the merchant Balthasar Charles, to the daughter of a Netherlander named Bernardo in Verona, and to Angiola, Pietro Pellicorno's housemaid.[25] Artisans from the Netherlands also settled in Venice, and although they were never

[21] See, for example, Simonsfeld, *Der Fondaco* and Kellenbenz, "Le déclin", 109-183.
[22] Stella, *Chiesa e Stato*, 279.
[23] Fusaro, "Les Anglais et les Grecs", 605-606, who also points out that in Venice a strict separation existed between the English mercantile and diplomatic communities. On the English-Greek collaboration, also Fusaro, "Coping with transition".
[24] Romano, *Housecraft*, 124-129.
[25] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.1782; Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.1833.

as numerous as the German bakers or the silk workers from Lucca, they were in close contact with the traders.[26] Quite a number of goldsmiths from the Low Countries worked in Venice, such as Ambrosio Sneider who practised his trade at his shop *Del Fiamengo*. He was related to the merchant Daniel Nijs and was often engaged by Netherlandish merchants to assess the value of jewellery and silverware.[27]

A constant stream of temporary visitors from the Low Countries also arrived in Venice. In addition to the sailors and shipmasters, travellers stopped by on business trips or grand tours. There were a few inns and guesthouses in Venice run by Netherlanders, such as the *Leon Bianco* located in San Bartolomeo near Rialto, but visitors often preferred to stay with acquaintances or family members.[28] The rich Amsterdam merchant and poet Joannes Six van Chandelier, for example, came to Italy on two business trips between 1649 and 1652, and while in Venice he was in close contact with a number of resident merchants. He dedicated a long poem on Venice to five of them, in which he specifically thanked Jan van Aalst, known in Venice as Giovanni van Aelst and who had been in the city since at least 1643,[29] for his hospitality. The other merchants he mentioned in his poem were Giovanni (Jan) Druijvestein, who was the Netherlandish consul at that time, Pieter Sluijter, Jan van Uffelen, and Abraham Heijermans.[30] Artists from the Low Countries visiting Venice also frequented the resident Netherlandish merchants. Van Dyck and

[26] Fedalto, "Stranieri a Venezia", 265. For silk workers from Lucca, see Molà, *The silk industry*; Molà, *La comunità dei lucchesi*.

[27] ASV, NA, b.10780, n.p., 26 November 1629; b.10783, c.869v-870r; b.10803, c.683r-683v. Another goldsmith, Lamberto Verher from Antwerp, signed a contract in 1598 with Giacomo van Castre and his business associates in Constantinople to come and live in Van Castre's house in Venice and work for him for three years, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.165; 811; 996; Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, nos.2624; 3006; 3340.

[28] One Michael Brestsan from Bruges was innkeeper at the *Leon Bianco* in 1544. More than a century later the inn was still in the hands of a Netherlander by the name of Jan Suster, Meijer, *Een speurtocht*, 50; Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, nos.2742; 3578. On the highly developed hospitality infrastructure of many Italian cities, see Mączak, *Travel in early modern Europe*, 30ff.

[29] ASV, VSM, Nuova serie, b.19, 16 June 1671.

[30] Although the primary goal of his trip was business, Six van Chandelier was very interested in the sights, on which he comments in his poem, Jacobs, "Met oogen slechts daar by", vol.I, 129. See, for Netherlanders on Grand Tour, Frank-Van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour*. Another traveller who mixed a business trip with the pleasures of sightseeing, was the Netherlandish man of letters Pieter Cornelisz Hooft, at that time still destined for a career in commerce. He journeyed to Italy, visiting Venice between August and December 1599 and again, between October 1600 and March 1601, staying at the house of Francesco Vrins, who had been residing here since 1583 and who was a business contact of Hooft's father. During his first visit Hooft fell in love with the daughter of Cornelis Hoons, but she did not answer his feelings when he returned in 1600, Hooft, *Reis-heuchenis*, 27; Van Tricht, *De briefwisseling*, vol. I, 65-71.

Rubens, for example, both visited the house of Nijs, who was renowned for his large collection of paintings and antiquities.[31]

The provenance of the Netherlandish merchants

In early modern Venice anyone from the Low Countries was described as *fiammingo*. The merchants themselves also used the same terminology and presented themselves as 'Flemings'. The trader Cornelis Jansen, born in Hoorn in the province of Holland, referred to himself as *fiammingo*, as did Marco Moens, a merchant born in Antwerp in the province of Brabant.[32] This generic term encompassed inhabitants from both the southern and northern provinces of the Netherlands, but by 1590 the Low Countries were far from a united political and economic entity. The first Netherlandish traders active in the overland trade and engaged in the grain imports in the 1590s originated from Antwerp. Did this change once Amsterdam came to the fore as the most important hub of trade in the Low Countries? The background of the Netherlandish merchants has been established for the 161 traders taken from the sample years.[33] The upheaval in the Netherlands and the resulting mass migration during the better part of the second half of the sixteenth century means that a *fiammingo* in Venice could have been born in the province of Holland or Brabant, but also in the diaspora communities in trading centres such as Frankfurt, Hamburg or Amsterdam. In these cases, the merchant in question has been categorised as Southern Netherlandish, because through his migrant background he was related to the sixteenth-century tradition of commerce with Venice.

[31] Meijer, *Een speurtocht*, 63-66, for artists from the Low Countries residing in Venice. On Nijs' art collection, see below, Chapter 6, 158-159.

[32] ASV, AC, Miscellanea penale, b.34/5, passim and ASV, NT, b.935, testament Moens, 10 November 1661. See for *fiamminghi* from both the Northern and Southern Netherlands in Rome De Groof, "Natie en nationaliteit", 94-95. In addition to the lack of distinction in Venetian sources, the traders themselves only increased the confusion by sometimes referring to themselves not by mentioning their native town or region, but their place of settlement: in 1629, the Netherlandish merchants Melchior Noirot, Daniel Nijs, and Giovanni de Wale registered with a notary that Rodolfo Simes was English and not Venetian. They explained that if a trader was active in different cities, he could operate under different names, and that he could be known as "Tiberio from Rome, Tiberio from Naples, Tiberio from Florence, while Tiberio was one and the same, and from just one country, either English or Netherlandish, or something else, but not from the places he was named after", ASV, NA, b.10780, 6 April 1629.

[33] See Annex A. The following information is based on Venetian archival sources, Baetens, *De nazomer*; Brulez, *De firma Della Faille*; Stols, *De Spaanse Brabanders*; Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*; Elias, *De vroedschap*; Van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*; Wijnroks, *Handel*; Engels, *Merchants, interlopers.*

The provenance of 120 of the 161 merchants active in Venice in the sample years could be determined. The overwhelming majority (102) originally came from the Southern Netherlandish provinces, primarily from Antwerp, the region that had a long tradition of commerce with Italy. Only eight traders were natives of the Northern Netherlands, while twelve originated from cities outside the Netherlands.[34] The relation between Southern and Northern Netherlanders in Venice coincides with the patterns in the other main Italian harbours. Among the merchants active in Genoa between 1590 and 1620, just four came from the Dutch Republic, while in the larger community in Livorno the Southern Netherlandish element was dominant as well.[35]

The dramatic developments in the economic and political set-up of the Low Countries are not reflected in shifts in the composition of the community of Netherlandish merchants between 1590 and 1650. As commercial relations between Venice and the Netherlands changed, with Amsterdam taking up an important position in the maritime trade with the Italian peninsula, the number of Netherlandish merchants in Venice increased, but their geographical background showed remarkable consistency and the number of merchants originally from the northern provinces remained very low during the first half of the seventeenth century. Instead, because many of their family members and business partners had left the Southern Netherlands for the northern provinces, the merchants in Venice were connected with the substantial group of southern immigrants in Amsterdam. These contacts and their experience gained in the traditional Antwerp-Italian trade ensured the Southern Netherlanders a prominent role in the seaborne trade between Italy and Amsterdam.[36]

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[34] Daniel Steenwinckel was active in Venice in 1620 and came originally from Amsterdam. Giovanni Druijvestein (1640, 1650) came from Haarlem. Gerard Reijnst (1630, 1640, 1650) was also born in Amsterdam, as was Giacomo Stricher (1640, 1650). Druijvestein and Stricher were consuls, appointed by the States General. In all probability, the first consul, Egidio Ouwercx, would have come from the Dutch Republic, but his background remains unclear. Cornelio van Eeden most likely also came from the northern provinces. Cornelio and Giovannia Giacomo van Barle, present in Venice in 1630, 1640, and 1650, were probably from Breda. This city was part of the Dutch Republic since 1637, which is why the Van Barles have been considered as Northern Netherlanders. Most of the twelve merchants coming from cities outside the Netherlands, such as Del Prato, Engelbrecht, Frens, and the Van Collens, originally came from Aachen. They had either moved to the Netherlands, as in the case of the Van Collens, or had developed family ties with Netherlandish families who had migrated to the German cities, see Baetens, *De nazomer*, vol.I, 185-187, 258.

[35] Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 113-114, 122. These were Nicolaas van Rijn, Nicolaas Hudde, and Pietro Overlander from Amsterdam, and Jacob van Neck from Enkhuizen. Cf. Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*, 155, whose observation that the majority of Netherlandish merchants in Genoa were from the Dutch Republic seems rather exaggerated. For Livorno, Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 48.

[36] Van Gelder, "Supplying the *Serenissima*", 51-54; Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*, 153-155.

Not only did relatively few Northern Netherlandish merchants settle in Venice, at no point did they form a separate group of *olandesi*, distinct from the Southern Netherlanders, as suggested by Israel.[37] Traders from both southern and northern origin collaborated on a daily basis in a single trading nation, as shall be discussed in the next chapter, and they were often connected through familial bonds. For instance, the Amsterdam merchant Giovanni Reijnst, who lived in Venice from at least 1625, ran a firm together with Abraham Heijermans of Antwerp origin and was firmly linked to other Antwerp refugee families, such as the Nichetti, by marriage.[38]

A very strict division between Southern and Northern Netherlanders abroad at this time seems highly artificial, and was certainly not a distinction that the merchants themselves would have made.[39] For the merchants in Venice, the idea of a Netherlandish *patria* was quite extensive and included both the southern and northern provinces; the further away from home, the more capacious the idea of *patria* became, reducing differences that might have existed in the native country.[40] The case of Cornelis Jansen already illustrated how the assistance of the resident merchants in Venice from Southern Netherlandish origin went beyond the political borders of their native lands. In 1608 Daniel Nijs, born in Wesel of Southern Netherlandish parents in exile, came to the aid of the carpenter Everart Hendricksen from Dordrecht. Hendricksen was incurably ill from syphilis and without any acquaintances in Venice or money. Nijs paid 55 ducats for the accommodation, food, medical treatment, and even the funeral of the unfortunate carpenter, stating that he would not allow a "paesano", a fellow countryman, to die on the streets.[41]

That the concept of national identity was quite fluid is also demonstrated by the fact that traders originally not from the Low Countries were also included among the *fiamminghi*. Geremia Calandrini descended from a Calvinist family from Lucca that had fled to Northern Europe in the 1560s. The Calandrinis settled in Antwerp, Frankfurt, and finally in Amsterdam, where they became wealthy entrepreneurs, closely linked in business and marriage to Antwerp

[37] Cf. Israel, "The Dutch merchant colonies", 87, 92, 100.
[38] Reijnst's father, Gerrit, was married to Margaretha, daughter of well-to-do merchant Jan Nicquet/Nichetti (1539-1608), whose sons Giacomo and Giovanni both lived and traded in Venice as well. On the interrelated Reijnst and Nicquet families, Logan, *The 'cabinet'*, 15-31.
[39] Dursteler has shown how fluid the concept of national identity was among the Venetian mercantile and diplomatic community in Constantinople, Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*.
[40] Duke argues that it was the widespread disaffection on the eve of the Revolt that formed the first expression of a national identity in the Netherlands, see Duke, "The elusive Netherlands", 10-38. Cf. Groenveld, "Natie".
[41] Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2307: "per esser suo paesano".

émigrés like the Van der Meulens and Latfeurs.[42] That they presented themselves as Netherlandish in Venice can be seen as an indication of the importance of family ties with native Netherlanders and shared religious beliefs, although the Calandrinis may also have found it more advantageous to belong to the Netherlandish minority group than to trade in Venice as Italians.[43] Similarly, members of refugee families from German cities were also regarded as Netherlandish merchants in Venice, and presented themselves as such. The Van Collens, for example, were originally from Aachen, but were banned from this city because of their Protestant beliefs and then settled in Amsterdam. The three brothers Geremia, Giovanni, and Pietro operated in Venice as part of the Netherlandish nation.[44]

Forging family ties, economic partnerships, and bonds of friendship

Feeling decidedly nervous, Martin Hureau travelled from Venice to Cologne in May 1608 on an important mission. Hureau had worked the preceding nine years in Venice with his uncle Pietro Pellicorno - first as an apprentice and then as a partner - together with his cousin Alvise du Bois. When Pellicorno died in 1607, the two cousins had taken over the management of the trading house. Having achieved economic independence, it had become time to set up a family, and Hureau was on his way to get married to a girl he had never seen. He knew she was rich, but he feared she might be ugly, as he confided by letter to Du Bois.[45] Hureau's prospective bride was Margareta de Groote, daughter of the wealthy Catholic merchant Nicolaas de Groote, who had fled from Antwerp to Cologne because of the Revolt. Martin's journey had in fact a combined aim of meeting his future bride and (re-)establishing commercial contacts. He married Margareta on 4 November 1608, and a double portrait was made to commemorate the occasion (Ill. 4.2). While in Cologne, Martin also entered into a business partnership with old and newly acquired family members.[46]

[42] A similar pattern, of Italians settling in the Netherlands, applies to the families Quingetti and De Robiano: though they were of Italian descent, they had completely integrated into Antwerp society, preferring to marry local women and to trade with Antwerp merchants, Van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 65, 66, 84-85, 188, 211.
[43] On the role of the Netherlandish nation in obtaining collective trade privileges, see below, Chapter 5, 126-137.
[44] Annex A; Van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*, 182.
[45] Du Bois assured him that he had heard that she was quite beautiful, Baetens, *De nazomer*, vol.I, 186-187.
[46] The following is based on Pellicorno's testament in Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, 824; Hureau's last will in ASV, NT, b.757, 3 October 1630; Baetens, *De nazomer*, vol. I, 186-189. For the De Groote family in Cologne, Ibidem, vol. II.

The company's principal places of business would be the branches in Venice, run by Hureau and Du Bois, and in Amsterdam, run by Caspar van Colen and Gijsbert Tholincx. Guglielmo Tilmans would run a smaller branch in Pesaro, an important stop on the trade route to Naples, and Jeremias Boudewijns would manage the business in Cologne.[47] Matteo van Loosen, married to a cousin of Margareta de Groote, would join the Venice branch, while Jan Pellicorne would participate from Leiden. They would mainly trade in textiles from the Northern and Southern Netherlands, and Italian and Levantine products such as silk, cotton, rice, and currants, transported via both the overland and seaborne routes.

The firm founded in Cologne in 1608 was a continuation of an earlier partnership between the late Pietro Pellicorno, Hureau, and Du Bois in Venice, Tilmans in Pesaro, Valterio del Prato (and after his death, Boudewijns) in Cologne, and Van Colen in Amsterdam. The composition of the firm essentially remained the same over subsequent decades, with Alvise's brother Abraham du Bois in Hamburg also joining in, until it was dissolved after the death of Hureau during the plague year of 1630.[48] Du Bois continued trading from Venice with, amongst others, Hureau's widow, who returned north to Antwerp, until he went back to the Low Countries himself in 1638. Samuel Boudewijns and Gualterio van der Voort, later joined by his brother Isaac, took over the trading house in Venice, which remained in business until the Van der Voorts' massive bankruptcy in 1650.[49]

Except for Del Prato who was from Aachen, all the business partners in Venice, Pesaro, Cologne, Hamburg, and Amsterdam were from Southern Netherlandish families. More importantly, they were all closely linked to each other through kinship ties. For instance, the mothers of both Hureau and Du Bois were sisters of Pietro Pellicorno, who himself had married Susanna, the daughter of another of the Netherlandish traders in Venice, Balthasar Charles. A second daughter of Charles was the wife of Guglielmo Tilmans in Pesaro, and a third, Anetta Charles, had married Pietro, the brother of Valterio del Prato.[50] The dizzying network of

[47] On the specific details of the business contract, Ibidem, vol. I, 187-190.
[48] In 1638, just before Du Bois returned to the Low Countries, the accounts were settled, ASV, NA, b.10798, c.279rff, 22 May 1638.
[49] Samuel Boudewijns died in 1639, ASV, NT, b.758, 21 December 1639. For the fall-out of the Van der Voort bankruptcy, see ASV, GF, Dimande, b.45, no.7, 1651, and the notarial records for the years 1650-1651 in ASV, NA, b.10820-10823. Also Baetens, *De nazomer*, vol. I, 190.
[50] The Del Pratos were related to the De Groote family, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.1526. Valterio was also Pellicorno's brother-in-law, having married his sister Lucretia Pellicorno. A fourth sister of Pellicorno, Anna, married Emberto Tholincx, with their son Gijsbert becoming Martin Hureau and Alvise du Bois' partner in Amsterdam. Du Bois was also related to the Tholincx family through his wife. Another Lucretia, the sister of the Del

intersecting family relations continued, with Caspar van Colen taking the sister of Alvise du Bois as his wife, while his brother Giovanni van Colen married Lucretia del Prato, daughter of Pietro and Anetta Charles.[51]

Many of the Netherlandish firms in Venice show a similar pattern of overlapping kinship ties and commercial contacts, a common method for countering the hazards and risks involved in international trade in the early modern period: with communication by mail slow and uncertain, and legal institutions that could enforce contracts over long-distance lacking, merchants needed to rely on far-off associates to represent their interests, entrusting them with sums of money, letters of exchange, and precious commodities. Business partners therefore needed to be chosen with the greatest possible care. Family members were the most obvious choice because they shared the same responsibilities for maintaining the family's financial and social standing, and consequently were less likely to betray the trust invested in them. Family ties formed the social backbone of the geographically dispersed merchant world. A wide-ranging family network offered the possibility to direct the flow of goods, capital, and information through trusted channels.[52]

The "Memoria" that the Amsterdam-born merchant Pietro van Teijlingen wrote at the end of his life, falls outside this study's timeframe, but clearly reveals the early modern merchant's ideas on the interrelation between marriage and business.[53] His instruction to his heirs, his nephews Cornelio and Agostino, and his natural son Giovanni, addressed at length the topic of matrimony. Cornelio was singled out - maybe because he was the eldest or because the others were already married - and advised to travel to Amsterdam to find a bride, but not before having established a thriving business in Venice. When the right moment had come, he would need to make sure that his wife was from an honourable family, and that he would receive out of the

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Pratos, was married to Franciscus Boudewijns, the brother of Jeremias. See, for a detailed description of these intricate family relations, Baetens, *De nazomer*, vol.I, 190ff.

[51] Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2876.

[52] Mauro, "Merchant communities", 274; on the importance of family networks among Portuguese traders in Atlantic trade, see Studnicki-Gizbert, "La "nation" portugaise"; and among early modern Netherlandish merchants, Kooijmans, "Risk and reputation"; Veluwenkamp, "Familienetwerken". Although kinship ties did limit the risk of untrustworthy behaviour, they by no means guaranteed reliability. Opportunism sometimes could prove a greater incentive than family loyalty, as we have seen in the case of Jan della Faille, see above, Chapter 2, 43. See also Lesger, "Over het nut van huwelijk" for an analysis of the advantages opportunistic behaviour offered early modern entrepreneurs.

[53] The undated "Memoria voor mijn cousijns Cornelio en Agostino van Teylingen en mijn naturale soon Jean van Teylingen" in Dutch is included in NT, b.935, while an Italian translation is found with Van Teijlingen's will dated 28 January 1690 in that same notary's *busta* 936.

marriage no less than what he would bring to it, because the wedding would affiliate the two houses, providing them both with 'negotij'.

Matrimony, therefore, was much more than the bond between two spouses; it was a union that fused together families and mercantile houses. No wonder that in 1630, in his last will, Hureau himself entreated his business partners and "cugini" Alvise and Abraham du Bois, Matteo van Loosen, Jeremias Boudewijns, Gijsbert Tholincx, and Guglielmo Tilmans to assist his wife with marriage plans for his daughters, so that they would be well-placed, "ben colocate".[54] A well-chosen spouse offered the opportunity to combine the two families' capital, network of contacts, and experience in international trade. Not all Netherlandish traders in Venice married; some set up an all-male household, like the three Van Castre brothers. But when they did wed, they showed a distinct preference for occupational endogamy, often marrying partners from other Netherlandish families engaged in trade with the Mediterranean, and located either in Venice, in the Low Countries, or in one of the other European trading centres with a substantial diasporic community.[55] In establishing such marital bonds, the traders often referred back to their native customs: for example, in the marriage contract between Catharina, daughter of the merchant Stefano van Neste, and his business partner Adolfo van Axel it was specifically stipulated that the union would be concluded according to Antwerp laws and practices.[56]

For long-term business ventures the Netherlanders in Venice in general preferred partners from the reservoir of compatriot traders.[57] The trading companies of the brothers Giacomo and Giovanni van Lemens, the brothers Amblardo, Giacomo, and Tommaso van Castre, Daniel Nijs and Giovanni Falconieri, Giovanni van Mere and Luca van Uffelen, to name but a few operating

[54] ASV, NT, b.757, c.83v.

[55] Just as Hureau, the two Nichetti brothers, Giovanni and Giacomo, also left Venice to find a bride; Giovanni travelled to Amsterdam in 1597 to marry Constantia de Haze, of Antwerp descent and daughter of a *Straatvaart* trader. Six years later, his brother went to Amsterdam to marry Clara, Constantia's sister. Both Nichettis returned to Venice with their wives. For the De Haze family, which had relatives in Antwerp, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Hanau, and Hamburg, see Baetens, *De nazomer*, vol.I, 151-153; Elias, *De vroedschap*, vol.II, 599-605. Marriage with Venetian spouses occurred only occasionally, mostly between the daughters of the Netherlandish merchants and Venetian patricians, see below, Chapter 6, 170-176.

[56] " tutte quelle incombenze, che godono, e sono tenuti i cittadini originarij della città d'Anversa nella Brabantia in virtù di qualsi voglia statuto, decreto, legge, privilegi, [e] usi", ASV, NA, b.10766, c.681r-681v, 26 November 1621. Catarina's dowry was set at 6,000 ducats in cash. Another of Van Neste's daughters married the trader Abraam Bervins, ASV, NA, b.10766, c.517v, 11 September 1621.

[57] Deeds of incorporation did not need to be authenticated and are relatively rare in the notarial archives, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, xxx, but see, for example, ASV, NA, b.10803, c.504r-505r, 11 December 1640, for the company contract between Giacomo and Martino van Neste.

in Venice between 1590 and 1650, testify to this tendency.[58] Even though they favoured collaborating with relatives and compatriots, this does not mean that the traders operated in isolation, which would have run counter to the logic of trade. Although sources documenting whether the Netherlanders made use of a regular group of local producers, traders, and retailers are scanty, the notarial archives do offer an insight into the Netherlanders contacts with native Venetian entrepreneurs. The inventory of the papers of Francesco Vrins, drawn up in 1604, shows that he actively traded in Spanish wool and lists more than eighty IOU's from, amongst others, twenty Venetian wool combers and dyers.[59] The list of creditors trying to salvage some of their money from the bankrupt trading house of Giacomo and Giovanni van Lemens in 1607 contained the names of fifteen Venetians, including seven patricians.[60] Both examples show that the Netherlanders were firmly imbedded in the local commercial world.

Yet for long-distance trading contacts, the merchants usually had Netherlandish correspondents, not just in the Low Countries, but also elsewhere in Italy, Spain, and the German trading centres. The notarial records contain a multitude of *procure* or powers of attorney, by which traders designated a colleague to act on their behalf. Giovanni Druijvestein and Federico van den Heuvel, for example, sent silk from Messina to their contact Cornelio van Eijch in Livorno, while Giacomo and Melchior Noirot collaborated with their brothers Balthasar and Giovanni in Naples.[61] Marco Moens loaded *tabini* (taffeta silk) destined for his correspondent Pietro di Meulenar in Cadiz on the same ship that Antonio de Retano sent Levantine tapestries, *tabini*, and Venetian mirrors to Pietro van der Waijer.[62] They frequently traded with the large community of Netherlandish merchants in Cologne and in Hamburg: when Cornelio van Eeden

[58] For the Van Lemens firm, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol.II, no.2497; for the Van Castre brothers, ASV, NA, b.10766, c.26r-26v, 4 January 1621; for Nijs and Falconniers, who both worked for their relatives Pietro and Giacomo Gabri, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol.I, no.1273; For Van Mere and Van Uffelen, ASV, NT, b.756, c.113.

[59] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 644-656. Vrins' relative Lancilotto Snellich was his main correspondent in Seville.

[60] ASV, CRD, b.13, 18 March 1611. The Van Lemens brothers had gone bankrupt in 1607, after which they and their creditors, including the Netherlandish merchants Nicolò Perez and Carlo Gabri, had agreed to a settlement of partial repayment over a period of five years. Giacomo van Lemens apparently had gone to the Vicenza region to delve for iron, which caused him to miss payments. When the authorities took actions against him, he fled abroad. His Venetian-based creditors now requested a 'salvacondotto', allowing him to return to Venice for another four years which would give them hope of at least partial reimbursement.

[61] ASV, NA, b. 10821, c.107v-108r, 11 May 1650; ASV, NA, b.10781, c.156r-156v, 16 February 1630. On Netherlandish trade in Livorno, Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*; on the economy of the *Mezzogiorno*, see e.g. De Rosa, "Economic crisis".

[62] ASV, NA, b.10799, c.924r-924v, 8 February 1638; c.936r, 12 February 1638. Also Kellenbenz, "Die fremden Kaufleute", esp. 328-334; Stols, "Les marchands flamands", 226-238; Stols, *De Spaanse Brabanders*, passim.

died in 1640, the firm "Rodolfo Oloffs and Cornelio van Eeden" dissolved, which had traded with Cornelio's brother Stefano in Utrecht and his brother-in-law Daniel Coeschat in Hamburg.[63]

Cooperation between the Netherlanders in Venice not only took the form of commercial partnership, but consisted of assistance in day-to-day affairs as well; they would offer help with translating Dutch documents into Italian, would vouch for each other's identity or act as guarantor for their compatriots. In case of a dispute, the traders tended to turn to Netherlandish colleagues for mediation. Both native and foreign merchants could seek recourse to a variety of specialized courts to settle any conflicts relating to international trade in Venice. Throughout Europe, however, merchants preferred to settle commercial disputes outside the formal tribunals, by means of arbitration.[64] Court cases were not only time-consuming and costly, but could also permanently damage the reputation of those involved. Two or more experienced and trustworthy colleagues would be requested to act as arbiters. In his "Memoria" Van Teijlingen even threatened to disown his heirs should they try to settle any conflicts among themselves in the Venetian law courts, advising them to turn to familiar friends to resolve controversies amicably.[65]

The Netherlanders in Venice showed a distinct preference when it came to arbiters, selecting compatriots with relevant expertise. Of the 39 merchants who appointed an arbiter between 1590 and 1621, 24 chose a fellow countryman to represent their interest, testifying to the strong ties of trust among the immigrants.[66] When the merchants preferred a Venetian arbiter, they usually needed expertise on a specific type of product. For example, in 1592, Francesco Vrins requested the Venetian draper Pasqualinus Polverinus to examine a damaged consignment of silk cloth and express his verdict.[67]

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[63] ASV, NA, b. 10802, c.275r-277r, 11 August 1640. Also Kellenbenz, "Le déclin".

[64] The tribunals in Venice with jurisdiction over commercial conflicts were the *Giudici del Proprio*, *Giudici di Petizion* (both part of the so-called *Curie di Palazzo*) and the *Consoli dei Mercanti*. Resolving conflicts through arbitration became common practice in Venice in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. On arbitration in Venice, see Marella and Mozzato, *Alle origine*. In the southern provinces of the Low Countries arbitration was practised as early as the twelfth century, Gelderblom, "The resolution of commercial conflicts", 9-12.

[65] ASV, NT, b.936: "prohibisco similmente, che nascendo fra di loro qualche differenza non possi nissun d'essi andare per via di Palazzo ma che col mezo de famigliari amici sia il tutto aggiustato, e chi sarà per trasgredire questi miei ordinij resti privo d'ogni heredità".

[66] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.242; 248; 259; 277; 297; 335; 349; 391; 408; 444; 450; 458; 495; 522; 524; 538; 589; 847; 896; 1266; 1297; 1301; 1365; 1708; Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, nos.1898; 1937; 2264; 2383; 2421; 2615; 2837; 2878; 3390; 4046.

[67] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.349.

The testaments of Netherlandish merchants in Venice show even more clearly the extent to which they relied on colleagues to continue to look after their affairs once they themselves had passed to the afterlife. All testators of the 34 wills found in the notarial records appointed one or more compatriots, often kin, as their executors. Adolfo van Axel named his wife, his father-in-law, and his brother as his executors, while the unmarried Giovanni van Mere asked his business companion Luca van Uffelen to handle his estate.[68] The executors were responsible for the division of property to the heirs and making the donations to religious and charitable institutions. They also had to see to it that relatives and friends received their legacies and that the necessary taxes were paid.[69]

The mutual assistance of the Netherlanders was based on their shared occupational interests and common provenance, and reinforced by the bonds of kinship and marriage as well as friendship. For members of the seventeenth-century Netherlandish mercantile elite, the concept of friendship carried a strong connotation of solidarity and practical assistance, based on shared interests.[70] It served to strengthen mutual ties and provided support to cope with the uncertainties of existence, something which must have been of even greater importance for those traders trying to make a living abroad. A formal state of friendship was formed between a child's natural kin and his or her godparents.[71] When it came to baptizing their Venetian-born children, the Netherlandish traders again showed a strong preference for fellow-countrymen. For example, when Catarina Justina, daughter of Guglielmo Tilmans and Maria Charles was baptized in the church of Santa Maria Formosa on 17 August 1591, Jan de Wale was her godfather. De Wale was also godfather to the child of Petrus della Faille, born in 1599.[72] If kinship ties already existed, becoming a godparent reinforced them; when no kinship ties existed, taking on the role of

[68] ASV, NT, b.757, 3 January 1636 (m.v.); ASV, NT, b.756, no.113, 8 September 1627.
[69] Being appointed in this position of trust was not always appreciated by the prospective executors: in 1652, Andrea Gheltof asked his "most faithful compatriots" Marco Moens and Giusto van Eijch to be his executors, but even though Moens took on this responsibility for three other Netherlandish traders, this time both he and Van Eijch refused, something which often occurred when an estate was entangled in debt, ASV, NT, b.509, 10 March 1652.
[70] Kooijmans, "Risk and reputation", 27, 32; Kooijmans, *Vriendschap*, 14 and passim, which studies in detail the lives of the family of the merchant Daniel van der Meulen, who was engaged in the *Straatvaart*.
[71] Bossy, "Blood and baptism", 133. For the patterns of godparenthood among the sixteenth-century Antwerp elite, see Kint, "The community of commerce", 179-183.
[72] ASV, Provveditori alla Zecca, b.1521. See, for more baptismal records, APV, Registri dei battesimi; Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.491; 951; Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, nos.1691; 2893. Of course, forming ties of godparenthood was not an exclusive affair among compatriots, and the Netherlanders in Venice also occasionally stood godfather to their Italian business contacts in Verona and Vicenza, see, for example, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.616; 807.

godparent formalized relations, requiring not just spiritual, but also practical assistance at the time of the child's apprenticeship or marriage.

Ties of friendship were also forcefully expressed at the end of the life cycle, when friends and relatives received gifts by testament from the deceased's possessions. Law and family strategy dictated the contents of last wills to a great extent, but gift-giving introduced a very personal element.[73] The testator could show his generosity by carefully selecting an object, naming the recipient and expressing his friendship, often asking his friends to keep his memory alive: Abraham van Collen gave specific gifts to both his business partners "per segno d' amore", as a token of his love: to Lorenzo Charles went a couple of silver cups, while Simon Charles was to have Van Collen's multi-volume atlas.[74] Martin Hureau left a painting of Danae to his "amatissimo compadre" Luca van Uffelen at his death in 1630.[75] Such gifts of friendship were often small, but precious and intimate objects such as the diamond ring Guglielmo Darmondt carried on his finger, and which was to go to the executor of his will, the merchant Egidio Wachmans.[76] Gift-giving in the merchants' last wills therefore marked their social circle and sealed personal bonds by selecting specific objects for their next of kin, business relations, and friends.

[73] Davis, *The gift*, 50-52. For a discussion of anthropological and historical studies on gift exchange, see the introduction to Ibidem; Bestor, "Marriage transactions in Renaissance Italy". On gifts in wills, Howell, "Fixing moveables", who compares the practices of gift giving of male and female testators in late medieval Douai.
[74] ASV, NT, b.935, 23 July 1675.
[75] ASV, NT, b.756, 3 October 1630.
[76] ASV, NT, b.806, 19 October 1644. The testaments of the Netherlanders abound with similar provisions. See, for instance, also the last wills of Melchior Noirot, who left silver drinking cups to Van Uffelen and Giovanni van Mere, ASV, NT, b.757, 24 May 1629. Noirot died five days later. Abraham Heijermans left Placido van Lemens a valuable necklace, see his testament in b.809, dated 9 March 1645. Rodolfo Oloffs bequeathed Marco Moens and Giovanni Battista Nicolai with a gift in his memory worth 1,000 ducats either in silver or diamonds, see his testament in b.807, 5 November 1647.

Religious differences?

That the number of Netherlandish merchants increased between the final decade of the sixteenth century and the first years of the seventeenth century did not go unnoticed outside Venice. Just before the Venetian ambassador to the Vatican took his leave after an audience with Paul V on 28 November 1609, the pope expressed his concern and disapproval about the growing presence of heretical traders from the Low Countries in Venice.[77] Dissenting ideas had found fertile soil among many segments of Netherlandish society in the sixteenth century, especially among the inhabitants of the larger cities in the southern provinces, where Calvinism, with its well-structured organization and strict doctrines, emerged as the leading Protestant current.[78] Around 1555, clandestine Calvinist congregations began to gather. During the Revolt these communities stood in close contact with the churches of Netherlandish refugees in places like Emden and London. In the Netherlands, the mercantile city of Antwerp became the centre of the Calvinist movement until Parma ultimately restored Catholicism in 1585.[79]

Paul V was clearly worried that Protestant Netherlandish merchants were settling in Venice, but quite a number of the traders were in fact Catholic, as becomes clear from the provisions in their wills, their funeral monuments - such as the one erected by the Helman family - and the close relationships with Venetian clergy and Venetian religious institutions. When Marco Moens drew up his last will in 1661, he invoked the Lord, the Virgin Mary, his guardian angel, his protector Saint Barbara, as well as all the other saints in heaven to intercede for the salvation of his soul. In calling upon the entire court of heaven, Moens - who had been in Venice since at least 1610 - was conforming to the standard Venetian practice of voicing religious sentiments at the beginning of a testament.[80] In his efforts to secure peace in the hereafter, he also

[77] The pope remarked with regard to the Netherlanders: "Noi vediamo malvolentieri tanti heretici in Venetia, non crediamo che metti conto ne anco a quella Repubblica", as cited by Poelhekke, "De Heilige Stoel", 212. The ambassador was Giovanni Mocenigo, who was in Rome between 1609 and 1612, and it was the visit of the Dutch Ambassador Cornelis van der Mijle to the Venetian Republic that prompted the pope to voice his concern. Paul V feared plans to establish a Netherlandish *fondaco*, but these concerns seem unfounded, since neither Van der Mijle, the States General, nor the Netherlandish merchants ever requested such an institution, nor do the records of the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia* bear any traces of discussions on such a subject, see below, Chapter 5, 125-126.

[78] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 101-105, 361-398, 637-676. For the dominant role of Calvinism in late sixteenth-century Antwerp, Marnef, *Antwerp in the age of Reformation*; Marnef, "Brabants Calvinisme in opmars".

[79] Alva first restored Catholicism in 1567, but between 1577 and 1585 Antwerp became Calvinist again.

[80] ASV, NT, b.935, 10 November 1661. For an explanation of Venetian testamentary practices, Pedani Fabris, *Veneta auctoritate notarius*, 92-100; Ambrosini, "Ortodossia cattolica", 6. The *Registri testamenta virorum* show that during his long stay in Venice, Moens regularly drew up his testament, possibly each time before he went on a

stipulated in great detail the amount of alms to go to Venetian religious institutions. The fathers of the Madonna dell'Orto, the church where Moens wanted to be buried in his own vault, received the bulk of his charity; he bequeathed them a hundred ducats with the obligation of saying funeral masses immediately after his death as well as a commemorative mass each month during the year following his death, to assist his soul in Purgatory. In addition, his executor was to give a priest twenty-five ducats every three months over a period of three years for a commemorative mass each day.[81]

Another merchant, Giovanni de Wale born in Ghent, had his bedchamber furnished with an altar and devout images. In his testament De Wale reserved a sum of 150 ducats for his burial in Sant'Apolinal, his parish church of which he had been appointed *procuratore*, which meant he could represent the interests of the church in legal transactions in court or before notaries. Technically, clergy could appear in court, but since this was considered unseemly, an ecclesiastical body could appoint *procuratori*, usually persons of stature for whom this was an honorary role.[82] De Wale arranged in his testament that the church was to receive 300 ducats upon his death because of this honour bestowed upon him.[83]

The bond with Venetian ecclesiastical institutions could take on another form, and many of the Netherlandish Catholic merchants also had close relatives who had entered a local convent. Adolfo van Axel left it to the executors of his will - his brother Francesco, his wife Catarina, and his father-in-law Stefano van Neste - to decide whether his daughters were to marry or enter a convent.[84] The wealthy merchant Giusto van Eijch, who had been active in Venice at least since 1650, drew up his will in 1689 and reserved the extremely large sum of 2,500 ducats to provide for commemorative masses, while setting aside 3,000 ducats to construct an altar in his honour and a tomb in its vicinity in the church of Santi Apostoli. Among his many donations Van Eijch stipulated that close to 9,000 ducats were to go to various family members in convents in both

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longer journey or when he embarked on a new business venture. As was the practice, however, each new will annulled the previous one and only the last two of his testaments can be found in the records of notary Angelo Piccini. The 1661 will was drawn up by Moens' own hand at a time that he was still healthy of mind and body, excluding the possibility that the invocation was part of the standard repertoire, suggested or chosen by a notary. His last testament dates from 19 February 1663 (m.v.) and is found in ASV, NT, b.936.

[81] ASV, NT, b.936, 19 February 1663 (m.v.).

[82] I wish to thank Professor James Grubb for informing me of the specific nature of parish *procuratori*.

[83] ASV, NT, b.510, the codicil of 19 July 1663: "et questo in risguardo del honore fattome in crearme per uno de procuratori d'essa chiesa".

[84] ASV, NT, b.757, 3 January 1636 (m.v.), c.215v: "con libertà di collocare anco le figliole col maritarle, overo monacarle in quella maniera, che à tutti tre meglio parerà, et piacerà".

Venice and Antwerp, including his daughter 'Madre Suor Gioconda Vanhaijch' in the Venetian monastery of Santa Marta.[85]

The Netherlandish traders also forged bonds with individual members of the Venetian clergy. One clergyman is even mentioned in three different Netherlandish testaments. Serafino Facio, a monk from the Paduan convent of the *Heremitani* was among the beneficiaries of the traders Melchior Noirot, Martin Hureau, and the daughter of merchant Guglielmo Tilmans, Catarina, all of whom died during the plague epidemic that afflicted the Venetian population around 1629-1630.[86] Their exact relationship remains unclear, but that the Augustinian monk had been in close contact with the Netherlandish immigrants for a long time becomes apparent from a letter he sent to Hureau twenty-four years earlier. Facio expressed his regret at having just missed Hureau, explaining that he had even skipped Sunday Mass and had hurried all the way from Venice to the small town of Marocco on the mainland to see Hureau off, but to no avail.[87]

Whereas the Netherlanders in Livorno erected a communal chapel with an altar for Saint Andrew and each year celebrated the saint's name day, no trace of such an institution combining religious and communal elements can be found in Venice.[88] No mention is made in the Venetian archives of a request relating to the nation's own place of worship nor do the testaments of the Netherlanders who died in Venice contain any donations to such an institution. Journals of Netherlandish travellers do not refer to a communal place of worship, nor do contemporary guidebooks, listing the sights, curiosities, and often all significant religious buildings in Venice. Instead, individual traders provided for their own chapels and funeral monuments, which were imposing enough to be included in the guidebooks. An example is the funeral chapel built in memory of Nicolò Perez in the (no longer existing) church of Santa Lucia.[89]

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[85] ASV, NA, b.10821, c.9v-10r, 4 March 1650; ASV, NT, b.935, 27 December 1687.

[86] Catarina Tilmans bequeathed 10 ducats to Facio, while both Noirot and Hureau left him a sum of 100 ducats. Their last wills are all included in the same *busta*, ASV, NT, b.757. For Noirot, see c.21r-23r, 24 May 1629; for Tilmans c.51r-54v, 25 October 1629, and for Hureau, c.82v-86r, 3 October 1630.

[87] Facio also asked Hureau to express his greetings to Balthasar Charles in Antwerp, SAA, Insolvente Boedel 22, 15 April 1606. This merchant was probably the son of Gaspar Charles, the Antwerp-based brother of Balthasar senior, see Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, nos.1505; 1526; 2105 and Baetens, *De nazomer*, vol.I, 165-166 for the Charles family.

[88] See ASL, Statuti della nazione Olandese-Alemanna in Livorno: the nation was officially instituted in 1622, when they were allowed to build the chapel and altar. Also Castignoli, "Il libro rosso", 171; Panessa and Del Nista, *Intercultura*, 16.

[89] Included in both Albrizzi, *Il forestiero*, 181 and Sansovino, *Della Venetia*, 141. The sister of Nicolò Perez spent a considerable sum of money constructing for the construction of the chapel, Correr, Mss. Cicogna, b.2011.

It was not uncommon for foreigners to have their own place of worship in Venice: the Germans, for instance, had of old made use of the San Bartolomeo, which was adjacent to their *Fondaco*.[90] Unlike the Germans, though, the Netherlandish merchants did not live in one specific building, but dispersed over various Venetian parishes, as shall be discussed below. That dispersal and the fact that they were a relatively small group probably made it easier for the Netherlandish traders to make use of the existing Venetian ecclesiastical framework. For them the church of their Venetian parish appears to have been the focal point in their religious lives, just as it was for their Venetian neighbours. The Netherlandish traders always arranged to be buried in their parish church and they frequently made donations to their local priest and to the poor living in their parish. Rodolfo Ollofs, for example, bequeathed 100 ducats to Gieronimo Melchiori, parish priest of the church of Santa Fosca, and Francesco van Axel left a silver salt-cellar to his confessor, the parish priest of Santa Maria Nova.[91]

The misgivings of Paul V were, however, not completely unfounded. If part of the group of Netherlandish traders were Catholics, another part was definitely not. The presence of heterodox foreigners was a continuous source of concern for the representatives of the Vatican in Venice, and they repeatedly complained to the Venetian Senate that dissenting strangers were given too much freedom in the city.[92] In 1607, the year after the Interdict Crisis, the papal nuncio complained that Protestants met regularly in a shop called *Nave d'Oro* or Golden ship, located in the *Merceria*. The shop was run by the Netherlandish retailer Bernardin and his son Alvise Zechinelli (or Secchini), who did business with a number of resident Netherlandish traders.[93] Much to the nuncio's concern, one of the most influential men in the Venetian Republic, the Servite friar Paolo Sarpi, who had defended the Venetian cause during the Interdict as legal and theological advisor (*consultore-in-iure*), frequented the Zechinelli's. In their shop Sarpi would meet the English ambassador "as well as many Germans and Flemings, and there, in a separate room they debate at length and speak as they please about the Court of Rome".[94]

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[90] Cecchetti, *La Repubblica di Venezia*, 475.
[91] ASV, NT, b.807, 5 November 1647; b.936, 10 October 1665.
[92] For the nuncio's complaints of the spread of heresy and irreligion among the Germans in Venice during the 1580s, see Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 330-331.
[93] The Zechinelli did business with, among others, Cornelio de Robiano and Balthasar Charles senior, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.87; 150; 250; 190; 205; 217; 248; 444; 462; 572.
[94] Cited by De Vivo, "Paolo Sarpi", 41. The shop was an important source of news for Sarpi, a place where he could collect information about international affairs from foreign visitors and international merchants. The Netherlanders

During the sixteenth century the Vatican had been constantly worried that Venice might serve as a Protestant bridgehead in Italy, and the city-state was indeed exposed to ideas of religious reform: as a commercial entrepôt, the city housed many immigrants of different faiths and one of the greatest concentrations of printers in Europe. On the Venetian mainland, the university of Padua attracted a large international student population, while the state's borders extended along Germanic lands, all of which facilitated the importation of heterodox religious beliefs. Reformation ideas initially had a wide social appeal in Venice, among progressive aristocrats as well as among 'élite' artisans, like goldsmiths, jewellers, and apothecaries.[95] Yet for the Venetian state, maintaining religious unity among its native inhabitants was vital in preserving political stability and therefore continued to be a fundamental concern. Dissenting Venetians were under strict control, and from 1547 the Inquisition was active in the *Serenissima*.

The way the Inquisition was set up, though, is illustrative of the Republic's attempt to counter heterodoxy while at the same time carefully protecting its own sovereignty. In addition to the three ecclesiastical members of the Holy Office, the same number of lay judges sat on the inquisitorial tribunal. These three laymen were always notable members of the Venetian patriciate and effectively controlled the tribunal, which met every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. They attuned the level of inquisitorial activity to the political course of the Venetian Republic, ensuring that religious unity was maintained without damaging Venice's interests.[96] Whereas dissenting Venetians were subject to tight control, Venice allowed certain groups of heterodox foreigners the freedom of worship, and even offered them conditional protection from persecution.[97] The Greek Orthodox Christians in Venice, often from the Venetian dominions, were allowed to build their own Orthodox church and monastery in Venice, partly paid for by taxes levied on Greek ships in the Venetian harbour.[98] The different groups of Jews were allowed

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provided him with reports on the political situation in the Low Countries. Sarpi had been frequenting this shop since the 1580s, Cozzi and Cozzi (eds.), *Paolo Sarpi. Opere*, 21-22; also *Vita del padre Paolo*, 69-71. The bibliography on Sarpi is vast, but see for the most recent contributions the essays in Pin (ed.), *Ripensando Paolo Sarpi*.

[95] Sella, *Italy*, 178 and, for the dissemination of Reformation ideas in sixteenth-century Venice, particularly among artisans, Martin, *Venice's hidden enemies*.

[96] Roughly speaking, during the 1560s and 1570s the Ottoman threat to Venetian possessions in the Mediterranean brought the Republic closer to the Vatican, which coincided with a more vigorous repression of heresy in Venice. Counter-Reformation fervour cooled during the last decades of the sixteenth century, when the *Giovani* faction gained political strength, Grendler, "The Roman Inquisition", 51-52, 63-65 and Pullan, "'A ship with two rudders'", 58.

[97] Ibidem, 27-28.

[98] Fedalto, "Le minoranze straniere"; Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 326; 333-337, for the sometimes tense relationship between the Venetian state, the Catholic clergy, and the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of Venice.

to practise their religion within the confines of the ghetto. Their presence was tolerated for their economic utility: the German Jews were mainly active as loan bankers and traders in second-hand clothing, while the Sephardic Jews were often international merchants.

Foreign Protestants were not officially allowed a place of worship in Venice, except for diplomats who were permitted to have chapels in their own homes and to employ a chaplain. In 1630, however, the nuncio protested that Protestant services now occurred in no fewer than four different places in Venice: at the embassies of England and the Dutch Republic, at the house of the Duke of Rohan[99] - the exiled leader of the French Huguenots whom the Republic had recruited as its commander-in-chief - and at the home of the Reformed merchant Daniel Nijs.[100] The nuncio had very little grounds to presume that the Venetian Republic would take action to stop the services held at the homes of the English and Dutch ambassadors, since in the wake of the European wars of religion, an agreement was reached whereby ambassadors sent to a country of a different religion were allowed to practise their faith in the privacy of their residency.[101] No form of ambassadorial privilege applied to Nijs, nor could he claim such prominence as the Duke of Rohan, yet despite the nuncio's complaints, the Venetian authorities did not interfere.

Reformed traders in Venice, therefore, could attend services either at the residence of Dutch ambassador or at the home of their colleague Nijs.[102] On 3 July 1625, Andreas Colvius, chaplain to the Dutch ambassador Johan Berck, baptized one of Daniel Nijs' children at the merchant's *palazzo*.[103] The arrangement recalls the concept of *schuilkerken*, the Catholic house chapels that proliferated in the Dutch Republic once the Reformed Church had become the public church. The *schuilkerken* did not operate in secrecy, but allowed dissenters to practise their faith

[99] Henri de Rohan (1579-1638) signed a five-year contract with Venice in June 1630, when the attack on Mantua by imperial troops increased Venetian fears of a Habsburg invasion, Alden Clark, *Huguenot warrior*, 189ff.
[100] *CSPV*, vol. XXII (1629-1630), 405, 23 August 1630. By 1600 Nijs was in Venice, working for the firm of his relatives Pietro and Giacomo Gabri, Van Eeghen, "Het geslacht Nijs", 75. In addition to his mercantile activities, Nijs also acted as a go-between for Sarpi, on the one hand, and the English ambassadors Wotton and Dudley Carleton, on the other. When Sarpi had written his *History of the Council of Trent*, which was highly critical of the failure of the Catholic Church at Trent to reunite Christianity, Nijs played a crucial role in smuggling the provocative manuscript bit by bit to England, where it was translated and published in 1619, Van Gelder, "Changing tack"; Cozzi, *Paolo Sarpi*, 272-273; Yates, "Paolo Sarpi's".
[101] Kaplan, "Diplomacy and domestic devotion", 343, argues that these embassy chapels were the cradles of the concept of extraterritoriality. These embassy chapels became a permanent feature in the decades after 1600, and in Venice the English ambassador Wotton was probably the first to make use of such an arrangement when he arrived in 1603-1604.
[102] Both Johan Berck and Willem van Lyere, ambassador *ordinaris* between 1622-1627 and 1628-1636 respectively, had chaplains among their entourage. Andreas Colvius was Berck's chaplain in Venice, while Volkerus van Oosterwijck (1627?-1634) and Daniel van Middelhoven (1635-1636) were in the service of Van Lyere, Schutte (ed.), *Repertorium*, 460-461.
[103] RUG, "Cort verhaal", c.55v.

in the privacy of their own homes, thereby preserving "the monopoly of a community's official church in the public sphere".[104] By tolerating domestic Reformed services, the Venetian Republic adopted an analogous solution, allowing certain dissenting foreigners a great deal of religious freedom within the private sphere.[105]

Only when the boundary between private and public was crossed did the Venetian authorities take action against Protestant worship by the Netherlanders. For example, the authorities felt compelled to interfere with the worship of Protestants from the Low Countries in 1624 when the nuncio complained that every Sunday someone from the Dutch ambassador's retinue would go out onto the *fondamenta* and ring a bell to signal the start of the services, calling even on Catholics to attend.[106] The sound of the bell crossed the threshold of the ambassador's residence, moving the services within the public domain and disrupting the existing arrangements. A secretary was sent to Berck's residency to admonish him and ask him to keep in mind that the services were meant only for his family and members of his entourage.

Berck denied the accusation that he attracted any Venetian Catholics to the sermons, but did admit that a number of Netherlanders came to his home, insisting that "Your Serenity knows full well the number of Netherlandish houses and families that have settled here", saying that they formed just a small congregation, which was sometimes joined by Netherlandish military men, noblemen, students or travelling merchants, shipmasters, and sailors.[107] How many of the Netherlanders regularly attended Reformed services in the Venetian Republic is difficult to tell. But reports from the vigilant nuncios as well as from the Council of Ten indicate that the services attracted a few dozen Reformed foreigners, mainly Netherlanders and some Germans. For example, on Sunday 18 January 1624, 35 men and women congregated in Berck's chapel and, some twenty years later, a group of circa 28 people, including thirteen children under the age of eight, attended at the house of the merchant Abraham Spilleurs.[108]

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[104] Kaplan, "Fictions of privacy", 1035.

[105] The Venetian authorities also pretended ignorance of the Lutheran congregation worshipping in rooms 81 and 82 of the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, Oswald, *Die Inquisition*, 33-41. The Fondaco housed a small number of Reformed Germans as well, but these were expelled by their Lutheran colleagues in the 1640s. On the relation between the Venetian state and heterodox foreigners, see Barbierato, "Luterani, calvinisti".

[106] Berck informed the States General of the incident, including Roman reports of the complaints in his letters, NA The Hague, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.04, Lias Italië, no.6897, letters dated 23 February 1624 and 8 March 1624. Also RUG, no.1473, "Cort verhaal", c.39r, 1 February 1624.

[107] NA The Hague, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.04, Lias Italië, no.6897, 15 March 1624.

[108] ASV, CD, Parti Roma, 9 February 1623 (m.v.), c.175r; Oswald, *Die Inquisition*, 30, 37.

Only one Netherlandish trader came under scrutiny from the inquisitors, although on two occasions. Giovanni Reijnst was first mentioned in an inquisitorial enquiry in connection with prohibited books.[109] No actions were taken against Reijnst, descendant of a prominent Amsterdam Calvinist family, but fifteen years later he was again under investigation, although this time *post mortem*. Reijnst had been running the trade in salt between the Venetian Republic and Milan, and upon his death in 1646, the Milanese Inquisition launched an enquiry into his religious beliefs. Reijnst's parish priest came forward and declared before the Venetian Inquisition that he had given the merchant the last rites, and that he had buried him in his church of Santa Maria Formosa.[110]

With the testimony of his parish priest, the enquiries into Reijnst's death stopped, but instead of completely refuting the inquisitors' suspicions, the incident illustrates that Protestants were also buried in Venetian churches. With no other burial grounds available, interment in a Venetian church was the only dignified option available for Protestant merchants, a practice which rarely provoked any protests.[111] The Reformed merchant Giovanni van Mere, for example, wrote his last will in 1627, and declared that he desired a Christian burial. Should he die in Venice, he wanted to be carried to his last resting-place in a simple wooden coffin in the evening hours.[112] Berck's chaplain found the ease with which a dissenting foreigner received a Catholic burial in Venice quite remarkable. He recounts how he accompanied Nijs on 7 April 1625 to Padua, where they visited the dying scholar Adriaan van den Spiegel. Van den Spiegel passed away that same night while they prayed at his deathbed and, without having confessed or received the last rites, he was buried "honestly" in a Catholic church.[113]

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[109] In 1631, Antonio Bonzius, a Bergamask, denounced himself to the Inquisition for having read a prohibited book. He told the judges that he had received the book from another Bergamask, who in his turn had been given it by the Netherlandish merchant Reijnst, ASV, Sant'Ufficio, b.88, 5 June 1631. The book in question was *Pasquino in Estasi*, an anticlerical and antipapal satire by Celio Secondo Curione, first published in 1543.

[110] ASV, Sant'Ufficio, b.103, 31 October 1646. Although the Duchy of Milan was Spanish territory, Philip II did not succeed in introducing the Spanish Inquisition. Instead, the Milanese tribunal followed the Roman model, Lea, *The inquisition in the Spanish dependencies*, 121-137. On the Reijnst family, see Logan, *The 'cabinet'*. Except for Reijnst, no other Netherlandish merchants are mentioned in the inquisitorial trials, although Teodoro Stricher, doctor in law and probably the son of Giacomo Stricher, merchant and consul for the Dutch Republic, was denounced in 1674 for having heretical beliefs, ASV, Sant'Ufficio, b.117. I thank Federico Barbierato for so kindly sharing these data on Stricher.

[111] When, in 1666, the priest of San Bartolomeo refused to allow the funeral of a Lutheran German merchant, the German nation took the matter up with the *Savi di Collegio* who overruled the priest, but instructed that the ceremony should take place without any *pompa*. Occasional incidents continued until the Lutheran Germans were given their own burial grounds on the island of San Cristoforo in 1719, Oswald, *Die Inquisition*, 64-67.

[112] ASV, NT, b.757, 8 September 1627.

[113] RUG, no.1473, "Cort verhaal", c.56r.

In contrast to their Catholic colleagues and compatriots, the Reformed traders did not include any references to funeral masses in their testaments and usually the testator entrusted the salvation of his soul to God alone, without allusions of devotion to Mary or any of the other saints.[114] Yet just like their Catholic compatriots, the Protestant Netherlanders did have a close relation with their neighbourhood parish and parish priest. For instance, Van Mere, originally from Antwerp, had been in Venice for almost two decades and upon his death left a hundred ducats to the poor in his Venetian parish of Santa Fosca and that same amount to the parish priest as a token of remembrance.[115] Both Catholic and Reformed merchants, then, made use of the existing religious infrastructure in Venice. The donations included in the testaments of both Catholic and Protestant traders also clearly show their continuing attachment to the Low Countries as well as to the diaspora of Netherlandish refugees. Van Mere donated another hundred ducats to the poor of the Netherlandish Calvinist community in Hamburg.[116] The Catholic Martin Hureau, also born in Antwerp, donated fifty ducats to each of the four *Hospitali* - the most important Venetian charity institutions - fifty ducats to the poor of his parish Santa Sofia, and threehundred ducats to the needy in both his native town and Amsterdam.[117]

The confessional heterogeneity does not seem to have caused any internal divisions within the group of Netherlandish merchants. Catholic and Protestant traders frequented one another and regularly collaborated.[118] That differences in religion were of less importance in everyday life than a shared origin and economic interests, mirrors the situation in the Dutch Republic, where the distinction between freedom of worship and freedom of conscience left room for other religious denominations. Everyday tolerance was the consequence of religious pluralism

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[114] For example, ASV, NT, b.757, for Van Mere's testament dated 8 September 1627 and a codicil dated 5 May 1631.

[115] ASV, NT, b.756, 8 September 1627. The last wills of other Protestant traders show the same pattern, e.g. Giovanni Druijvestein donated a hundred ducats to the church of Santa Maria Formosa and left the same amount to the parish priest to distribute among the most destitute, ASV, NT, b.935, 8 May 1683.

[116] ASV, NT, b.756, 8 September 1627: "aenden Nederlantschen armen tot Hamborgh den evangelische professie toegedaen, hondert ducaten dese munten courant gelt". Both Netherlandish Lutherans and Calvinists had settled in Hamburg in the course of the sixteenth century, but the former quickly entered the Hamburg elite. A separate Calvinist community developed, including a substantial number of wealthy merchants as well as poor artisans, Whaley, *Religious toleration*, 111-116.

[117] ASV, NT, b.757, 3 October 1630, 3 October 1630. Hureau's sister Anna was married to the Amsterdam publisher Zacharias Heyns, see Pellicorno's last will in Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, 823; Meeus, "Zacharias Heyns", 112-113. On Venetian charitable institutions, Pullan, *Rich and poor*.

[118] See, for example, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.832; 974; 1196; Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II nos.1797; 2096; 3923. Unfortunately the source material for a more systematical analysis of interrelations, such as marriage bonds, is lacking. The exact religious denomination of many traders remains unknown.

and people of different confessional allegiances came together in the many corporate entities in the Dutch Republic, such as guilds and civic militia companies.[119] The same holds true for the traders in Venice, who operated as a collective in the *nazione fiamminga* of which Reformed traders, like Nijs and Van Mere, formed part as did staunchly Catholic merchants, such as Carlo Helman and Marco Moens.

The high level of cohesion among the Netherlandish merchants in Venice was based on their shared provenance, and reinforced through familial bonds, business relations, and friendship. These connections extended across a larger international trading network consisting of different communities which had developed out of the mass migration during the Revolt. Although religious differences did exist within the Netherlandish community in Venice, these did not constitute a barrier to cooperation. In this respect, as well as in the ways in which mutual bonds were cultivated, the Netherlanders resembled the international network of Portuguese merchants which also can be seen as the prime example of religious heterogeneity, consisting of Jews, New Christians, and even a minority of Old Christians.[120] The next chapter will focus on the way in which the merchants used their internal cohesion as an instrument to obtain communal trade privileges, showing that the Netherlanders' position was not merely imposed on them, but evolved from the interplay between the Venetian government and these immigrant traders.

[119] On religious coexistence in the Dutch Republic, see, for example, Frijhoff, "The threshold of toleration"; Kaplan, "Coexistence, conflict"; Pollmann, *Religious choice*.
[120] See Ruspio, "La presenza portoghese"; Studnicki-Gizbert, "La "nation" portugaise"; Brunelle, "Migration and religious identity", 157-159.

Chapter 5. Individual and collective strategies

Becoming Venetian citizens

Venetian laws aimed at controlling the trade of non-Venetian merchants, yet even within this framework the Netherlanders, as individuals and as a collective, adopted different strategies to counter existing restrictions. One of these strategies was to acquire Venetian citizenship, which shall be discussed in the first paragraph of this chapter. After examining the way individual traders acquired the citizenship status, the strategies of the collective or *nazione fiamminga* are discussed. As a collective, medieval and early modern merchants were better equipped to take action in order to improve their position in a, sometimes inhospitable, host society, for example by lobbying the local authorities for communal trading privileges or by threatening with a trade boycott in case of hostile actions like the sequestration of ships and merchandise. In addition to the economic function, mercantile organizations often offered a social structure for the foreign traders, which further strengthened the interdependence and solidarity among the immigrants.[1]

This chapter also adresses what the nature of the collective organization of the Netherlanders in early modern Venice was. What was its economic role, and how did it function as a forum for sociability as well as a structure of support for its members? The last section of this chapter is dedicated to the interrelations between the Netherlandish traders and the representatives, both ambassadors and consuls, of the United Provinces. As Netherlandish-Mediterranean commerce intensified and the Dutch Republic developed into a potential political ally, diplomatic relations with Venice increased, which resulted in more contact between the envoys and the resident merchants.

Foreign merchants were officially prohibited to use Venice as a transit-station for their own commerce with the eastern Mediterranean ports and were only allowed to buy Levantine products from Venetian intermediaries and to sell their own merchandise intended for the Levant to others with full Venetian trading rights. Non-Venetian ships were equally at a disadvantage in the port of the *Serenissima*. In 1602 the Senate decided to reintroduce a law that had fallen into disuse with the massive arrival of ships from northwestern Europe following the grain shortages of the

[1] Harreld, *High Germans*, 46-50, where he briefly discusses the social functions of the foreign nations in Antwerp.

1590s. Having gained hope from the increased port activity during the last decade of the sixteenth century, the Venetian authorities, in an effort to stimulate the declining Venetian mercantile marine, limited the navigation of western (*ponentini*) ships to the routes between their homeports and Venice, thereby effectively banning western ships from the shipping lanes between Venice and the Levant.[2]

With this principle of "Ponentini per Ponente e Levantini per Levante" the Senate hoped to boost Venetian shipping. The main reason for the increased activity in the Venetian harbour during the 1590s, however, was the growing number of English and Netherlandish ships in the Mediterranean. Hence, instead of stimulating the employment of Venetian vessels, the 1602 law only was an additional reason for the northern competitors to increasingly by-pass Venice's port, and trade directly with the Levant or make use of the Tuscan free port of Livorno. Obviously these laws posed significant obstacles for foreign merchants already residing in the city. One option to improve their position was, of course, simply to evade Venetian laws, and Netherlandish merchants often used Goro, the small Adriatic harbour just on the other side of the border with the papal state and therefore outside the Venetian fiscal domain, to unload Levantine cargo and smuggle it into the Terraferma and the city itself.[3] Another, legal, option allowed foreigners to obtain full access to trade between Venice and the eastern Mediterranean. The official way for a foreigner to gain the same economic rights as Venetian citizens was to be granted *cittadinanza per privilegio*.[4] Two types of citizenship-by-privilege, as opposed to citizenship-by-birth which was discussed in Chapter 1, existed in Venice. Non-Venetians who had resided in Venice for a period of ten consecutive years could request the *cittadinanza de intus*, which gave access to the guilds and the right to trade under the same conditions as a native merchant in the city itself.

For foreign traders, however, it was the second type of citizenship-by-privilege that was the most important. The *cittadinanza de intus et extra* offered the opportunity to participate in international trade on the same terms and conditions as native Venetians, giving foreigners privileges such as access to Venetian-Levantine commerce and lower customs tax rates for the

[2] ASV, SM, r.62, c.91, 31 August 1602, discussed in Sella, *Commerci e industrie*, 34-36. On the legislation regarding Venetian citizenship and commerce, Ferro, *Dizionario*, 396.
[3] For complaints of the *Cinque Savi* on Netherlandish merchants using Goro, see e.g. ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.143, c.44v-46v, 20 July 1611 and c.82v-90r, 30 March 1612.
[4] To distinguish them from the *cittadini per privilegio*, native citizens were called *cittadini originari*, Ferro, *Dizionario*, 395-396.

import and export with both the Levant and the *Ponente*. Only by fulfilling the requirement of twenty-five years of residence in Venice and full payment of the *tansa* tax - an impost on assets like land, houses, but also merchandise and letters of exchange - could foreigners become Venetian citizens "at home and abroad". These substantial privileges represented a considerable investment of both time and money, which is why the Netherlandish merchant Francesco Vrins carefully filed away the document proving his *cittadinanza* status in the writing desk containing all his business paperwork.[5]

Vrins was not the only Netherlander who had successfully applied for citizenship: in 1600, Carlo Helman sought support from the Venetian government to regain a shipment of sugar, confiscated by the English on its way from Lisbon to Venice. He humbly asked the Senate to write a letter to the English Crown, stating that he was "suddito, habitante, et cittadino di questa citta" and requesting that his merchandise be released. Even though he was born in the Low Countries, Helman grounded his appeal for the Senate's intervention on his behalf by stressing his loyalty to the Venetian state: "just like my forefathers [were], and as I myself will be with all my possessions and my life in the service of the *Serenissima*", emphasizing his voluntary choice of Venice as his place of residence. What made his petition legally convincing, however, was not so much these professions of loyalty, but his status of *cittadino de intus et extra*. Consequently the Senate granted Helman's petition and sent a letter to Queen Elizabeth I, requesting that the goods of their faithful inhabitant and citizen Helman be released.[6] Protection from the Venetian state as well as lower taxes, then, was one of the important advantages of the citizenship status for a Venetian-based merchant. This was not the only time a member of the Helman family sought the intervention of the Venetian state, and the family's requests related to the *cittadinanza* illustrate the position of the Netherlandish merchants as Venetian citizens *per privilegio*.

Guglielmo, Carlo's older brother, had first been granted Venetian citizenship in 1579, which had allowed the Helman firm to conduct a lively trade in luxury products between Venice and the Ottoman Empire. Diamonds, emeralds, pearls (real and glass ones), camlets, silken cloth in different colours, and mirrors were sent on Venetian convoys to Constantinople, where the Helmans had clients in the highest circles of Ottoman society.[7] In 1583, for example, Guglielmo

[5] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 645.
[6] ASV, SM, filza December-February 1600, 12 December 1600.
[7] See the commercial letters included in ASV, Miscellanea Gregolin, b.12 terzo and the numerous notarial records in Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, for example nos.138; 176; 228; 330.

warned his correspondent in Constantinople that he was not able to find suitable diamond earrings for the sultana in Venice, but that he would search for some in the Netherlands.[8] Dealings with prominent Ottomans, however, did not always go smoothly: in 1594 Carlo Helman was involved in a dispute over an emerald-encrusted belt which he had intended to sell to the Prince of Moldavia, a tributary of the Ottoman sultan, for the sum of 25,000 ducats. The English ambassador in Constantinople acted as intermediary in the sale, but the deal with the prince fell through. Subsequently Helman, who was in Venice, accused the ambassador of fraudulent behaviour and demanded reimbursement for the belt. Months of legal wrangling ensued, with Carlo Helman's agent bringing the dispute before the *bailo*, the Venetian ambassador in Constantinople, who had the right to settle legal and commercial matters involving Venetian citizens.[9]

As citizen *per privilegio*, Helman could claim that the Venetian diplomat would hear the case, something the Senate confirmed in reply to the *bailo*'s letters. Even though the English ambassador continued to stall proceedings, the *bailo* finally decided the case in favour of the Helman firm.[10] His status as Venetian citizen, therefore, allowed Helman access to the trade between Venice and the Levant, as well as the right to use the Venetian commercial infrastructure, such as Venetian ships and the support of Venetian diplomats. This must have hich significantly reduced costs and risks at a time when there were no regular mercantile relations between the Low Countries and the Ottoman Empire, and no diplomatic representatives for Netherlandish traders in Constantinople to fall back on.[11]

The case of the Helman family demonstrates not only the commercial advantages connected to acquired citizenship, but also shows the discrepancies which could exist between the official legal requirements and the actual practice of obtaining the *cittadinanza per privilegio*. Carlo Helman, in fact, had only arrived in Venice in the 1590s, and hence did not meet the

[8] ASV, Miscellanea Gregolin, b.12 terzo, letter dated 13 August 1583, with addendum dated 26 September.
[9] *CSPV*, vol IX (1592-1603), 121; 123; 128; 133-134: it seems that Barton, the English ambassador, had asked the prince 40,000 ducats for the belt, intending to pocket the difference. When Helman's representative demanded justice, Barton tried at all costs to prevent his attempt at overcharging the prince from becoming public knowledge by stalling the hearing of the case. On the role of the *bailo*, see Dursteler, "The bailo", 3-5.
[10] The Senate stressed that the *bailo* Marco Venier, had jurisdiction over Helman and that the case should not be tried in a different, i.e. Muslim, law court. Referring the trial to another court "would prove injurious to the party sued, and would also be an infringement of the jurisdiction belonging to you, our representative", *CSPV*, vol. IX (1592-1603), 123, letter from the Senate to Vernier, 4 May 1594.
[11] The first official ambassador, Cornelis Haga, was sent to Constantinople by the States General in 1612. See De Groot, *The Ottoman empire*, for the earliest relations between the Dutch Republic and the Ottoman Empire.

citizenship criteria of twenty-five years of residence.[12] How exactly he had obtained the *cittadinanza* becomes clear from a report by the *Cinque Savi*, who had to evaluate requests for Venetian citizenship because of the associated commercial advantages.[13] In 1606, one year after Carlo's death, his two sons Pietro and Ferdinando submitted a request to be considered citizens as their father had been. In their petition they explained that the citizenship status originally obtained by their uncle Guglielmo in 1579, had been passed on after his death to Carlo, when he moved from Constantinople to Venice.[14] If citizenship could be transferred within the family, from brother to brother and from father to son, why, then, did Pietro and Ferdinando Helman need to submit a request to the *Collegio* to obtain a privilege that was lawfully theirs? The problem was that even though both sons had been appointed their father's lawful heirs, they had been born out of wedlock. Carlo Helman had three children, his two sons and a girl, with Lugretia Manetti, a woman from Padua. They lived in the same house and although Helman recognized her as the mother of his children in his testament, he did not marry her. Helman died while on a business trip to Seville, but just before leaving for Spain he had taken two precautions ensuring the safety of his assets and the future of his children: he had drawn up his last will and he had his sons legitimized by Albert and Isabella, Archdukes of the Spanish Netherlands.[15]

The question whether or not natural sons could inherit the status of *cittadino de intus et extra* was cause for much debate among the *Cinque Savi*. Four were in favour of granting the brothers' request; they took into account that Pietro and Ferdinando had been legitimized, that they were the sole heirs to their father's estate, and that they had been born in the city from a mother who was a Venetian subject.[16] Six months after his colleagues' report, the fifth *savio*, Marco da Riva, voiced his opinion. According to Da Riva, illegitimate children had no right to the privilege, and granting the request of Helman's sons would create a dangerous precedent.[17]

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[12] In the 1580s and early 1590s, Carlo Helman resided in Pera, the commercial district of Constantinople, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.138 and 286. He moved to Venice around 1593-1594, where he took over from his brother Guglielmo who had died in 1593, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.479.

[13] Petitions for citizenship can be found in the series *Risposte di dentro* of the *Collegio* and the *Risposte* series of the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*. See also VSM, nuova serie, b. 19, which contains eighteenth-century excerpts of documents, regarding citizenship, from the *Risposte* series. On the role of the *Cinque Savi* in assessing the requests for citizenship, Bellavitis, *Identité*, 32-33.

[14] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.141, c.181r, 14 August 1606 and c.187r-188r, 2 January 1606 (m.v.); also r.142, c.39v, 17 December 1607.

[15] ASV, NT, b.347, no.88, 6 June 1605; also included in Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 656-662.

[16] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.141, c.181r, 14 August 1606.

[17] Da Riva had been absent from the city, hence his belated report: ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.141, c.187r-188r, 2 January 1606 (m.v.). This was not the only occasion Da Riva disagreed with the four others. He frequently objected

Even more important than these objections pertaining to the boys' illegitimate birth, Da Riva saw their petition as a threat to Venetian commercial interests. The extremely young age of Pietro and Ferdinando - they were ten and five respectively - led Da Riva to suspect that others were behind the submitted petition, probably important Ponentine merchants, who were hoping to do business under the Helman name and thus profit illegally from the citizenship prerogatives. The abuse of the citizenship privilege was a recurring theme in Venetian legislation. In 1552 a decree of the Great Council stated that there were many persons who "under cover of their privileges carry to and from the city various goods belonging to foreigners, passing them off as their own", thereby evading customs duties.[18] Most likely Da Riva suspected the merchants Giovanni de Barlamont and Cornelio de Robiano, whom Helman had named executors of his will and left in charge of the boys' tuition. Both De Barlamont and De Robiano were active traders who had not requested citizenship themselves.[19]

The issues raised by Da Riva greatly delayed the process and it took almost a year before the request was discussed again, in December 1607. This time it was granted. The *Cinque Savi* started off by referring to the decree of 1552, but then quickly moved to the case at hand. Again the same arguments concerning the birth of the two boys were rehashed, but the *Savi* considered of decisive importance that Carlo Helman had been a wealthy merchant of good reputation, who had always held *casa aperta* in Venice, which indeed he did in grand style, as shall be discussed in the next chapter. Additionally, Helman had made considerable contributions to the Venetian state, having donated great sums to the city's charitable institutions and having increased the revenue of the customs duties with his trade.[20] In the end, the *Cinque Savi* did not subscribe to Da Riva's viewpoint, attaching greater importance to any future benefits which the Venetian state would derive from the Helmans' business firm. Pietro and Ferdinando Helman, therefore, merited the privilege. Nonetheless, their case also shows that when judging the rights natural sons could assert on privileges conceded to their fathers, the *Savi* made a distinction between the two different types of Venetian citizenship. Illegitimate sons of native Venetians were rightfully barred from the "offici et benefici" open to *cittadini originari*, they argued, but this did not apply to sons of foreigners and the *cittadinanza per privilegio*. Clearly, different rules applied to these

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to his colleagues' decisions and always took a more protectionist stance. See, for example, in the same register c.93v; 96r-96v; c.114v; c.190r-190v.

[18] As cited in Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 277.

[19] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 656-657, 660-661.

[20] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.142, c.39v, 17 December 1607.

two forms of citizenship, showing that acquiring the *cittadinanza* was a step towards greater economic equality for a foreigner, but not tantamount to complete legal integration.[21]

In addition to members of the Helman family, nine other Netherlandish merchants successfully requested Venetian citizenship.[22] In their applications they naturally stressed the importance of their mercantile activities to the Venetian economy, while they also explicitly pointed out that they had placed themselves and their business at the service of the Venetian state.[23] For example, Martin Hureau and Alvise du Bois bolstered their request by stating that their firm had been in Venice for some twenty-five years and by pointing out the great services their uncle Pietro Pellicorno had rendered to the Venetian state during his lifetime. The account of Pellicorno's accomplishments reflects the development of Netherlandish trade in general. Hureau and Du Bois reminded the Republic that their uncle had supplied large amounts of grain in years of famine, that he had been the first trader to conduct direct maritime trade between Moscovy and Venice, and that he had delivered large amounts of gunpowder and ammunition in 1606, the year of the Interdict. Hureau and Du Bois, of course, emphasized their own continuing service to the Venetian state.[24] Giacomo Storm, in his 1637 request, also pointed out his special devotion to the *Serenissima*, by recording that he had convinced certain Netherlandish ships to unload their cargoes of salt in Venice instead of Goro. This enterprise had resulted in his banishment from the pope's territories, but Storm now hoped that his act was a persuasive sign of his dedication to the Venetian state.[25]

The *Cinque Savi* were unusually lenient when they assessed the requests of the Netherlandish traders, who often failed to meet the citizenship criteria completely. For example,

[21] Also Grubb, "Elite citizens", 354. However, requiring citizenship was often a first step towards formal integration. See below, Chapter 6, 178.
[22] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.139, c.25r, 27 September 1593 for Francesco Vrins; VSM, Risposte, r.140, c.81v, 26 May 1600 for Giorgio Heldewier; CRD, b.11, 16 October 1604 for Gasparo Charles; CRD, b.13 and VSM, Risposte, b.143, c.154r-154v, 18 May 1613 for Stefano van Neste; CRD, b.13 and VSM, Risposte, b.144, c.23r-23v, 24 October 1614 for Martin Hureau and Alvise du Bois; CRD, b.18 and VSM, Risposte, b.147, c.155v, 23 December 1627 for Antonio Retano; CRD, b.19 and VSM, Risposte, b.147, c.178r-178v, 5 June 1628 for Adolfo van Axel; CRD, b.28, 7 September 1637 and VSM, Risposte, r.151, c.131r-131v, 7 November 1637, for Giacomo Storm.
[23] See, for example, the request by Charles who promised an "augmento alli datij, et al negotio" in ASV, CRD, b.11, 16 October 1604. See also the request by Antonio Retano in CRD, b.18, 23 December 1627:"essercitandomi nelle mercantie d' ogni sorte portando grandissimi uttili alli datij di V.S.".
[24] ASV, CRD, b.13, 24 October 1614.
[25] ASV, CRD, b.28, 7 September 1637; VSM, Risposte, r.151, c.131r-131v, 7 November 1637.

when Helman requested citizenship, he had been in Venice for no more than ten years.[26] His trade in luxury products and the resulting income from customs duties, however, were reason for the Venetian authorities to grant his petition. Francesco Vrins, who submitted his application for citizenship in 1593, also fell short of the required twenty-five years of residence. The *Savi* were willing to waive the missing five years because of his contribution to the import of grain during the previous years of food shortages.[27] The Venetian authorities were not always as lenient in judging requests for citizenship as they were in the cases of Netherlandish traders. Research shows that between 1534 and 1622, the *cittadinanza de intus et extra* was requested a total of 223 times, yet in just ten cases, which include Helman and Vrins, was citizenship granted to petitioners who had lived in the city less than 25 years.[28]

Other deficiencies in the requests were overlooked as well. Stefano van Neste, for example, could not meet the fiscal criteria: even though he had lived in Venice for twenty-eight years he had not paid the *tansa*. However, his uncle Antonio had done so between 1584 and the year of his death, 1603, and the *Cinque Savi* suggested that Van Neste would be given the opportunity to pay his taxes retroactively.[29] That citizenship requests from merchants with an international range of trading contacts could count on greater leniency can be explained by the Venetian economic situation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[30] In fact, one of the recurrent preoccupations of the *Cinque Savi* was that Venice nowadays was suffering from a "strettezza de negotiatori", a lack of traders. Allowing Netherlandish merchants to obtain economic citizenship, even if they did not meet the strict criteria, was one way in which they attempted to maintain the viability of Venetian commerce.[31]

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[26] ASV, Senato Privilegi (1563-1593), c.36.
[27] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.139, c.25r, 27 September 1593.
[28] Bellavitis, *Identité*, 50-51. English merchants do not seem to have requested citizen status, probably because their stays in Venice were usually quite short, cf. Fusaro, "Les Anglais et les Grecs".
[29] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.143, c.154r-154v, 18 May 1613.
[30] See, for example, ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.144, c.23r, 24 October 1614: in reply to the Hureau and Du Bois request, the *Cinque Savi* responded "havendo noi posto in considerationi et discorso quanto si deve (...) circa li tempi presenti nelli quali è grandemente decaduto il negotio de Levante per causa della concorrenza de tanti forestieri che fanno capitar le loro mercantie dalla Soria, et altri scale di Levante con navi forestieri nelle suoi parti da Ponente".
[31] The *Cinque Savi* expressed their concern about the lack of Venetian merchants able and willing to invest money in trade: "che la verità è che questi [capitali] sono in mano di non molti: poiche vi era gran numero di negotianti in Levante che havevano qualche capitale di tre, o quattromilla ducati, i quali hora per le disaventure passate sono annicchilati; di piu molti anco si hanno levato dal negotio, e fatto altro", ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.144, c.167r, 31 March 1618.

Petitions and privileges

Even though the economic advantages were significant, citizenship status was by no means indispensable, especially for those who traded between Venice and the *Ponente*, and not every merchant living in Venice for a long time applied for citizenship. The collective effort of the Netherlandish *nazione* helped merchants to overcome many of the fiscal barriers, offering an alternative to those who were unable or unwilling to request citizenship. The trading nation was a type of organization that developed in the commercial entrepôts of medieval and early modern Europe, consisting of a community of foreign merchants forming a guild-like association or coalition. Though nations could differ in their level of internal organization, the merchants were usually joined together by a shared geographical background, common economic interests, and social bonds.[32]

In contrast to the German, Jewish, and Ottoman traders, the Netherlanders in Venice were not officially recognized as a distinctive merchant community, in the sense that no collective rules or charters existed for merchants from the Low Countries, nor did specific Venetian laws regulate their settlement.[33] The Venetian government never imposed the same level of control over the northerners as it did over other groups of immigrant traders, probably because by the time the Netherlanders and English settled in Venice, the Republic could no longer exercise sufficient trade dominance to compel the Netherlanders to reside in a *fondaco*-like institution. Also, these traders, unlike the resident Ottomans and Jews, were never perceived as a threat to the political or religious stability of the Republic. On the other hand, the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* not only meant a higher level of government control over the German merchants' activities, but also entailed certain commercial privileges. Although several individual Netherlandish merchants tried to sell their German wares through the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* and the Vatican worried that

[32] The term 'nation' in early modern times encompassed a broad spectrum of meanings, sometimes indicating a state in the modern sense, a *fondaco*, specific geographical, linguistic or political groups, as well as an organized merchant lobby group, Brunelle, "Migration and religious identity", 289. Also Mauro, "Merchant communities", 261-266; Curtin, *Cross-cultural trade*, 3-4. Mercantile organizations could range from the very hierarchical structured, like the Germanic *Hansa*, to the more loosely organized trading nations in Antwerp. For Antwerp, see Harreld, *High Germans*, 40-59 and for the Portugese, Spanish, and Italian nations in that city, Goris, *Étude sur les colonies marchandes méridionales*.

[33] Nor are there any traces in the archives that the Netherlandish nation had its own statutes and membership lists, something the organization of Netherlandish and German merchants (the *nazione fiamminga-alemanna*) in Livorno, for example, did have, Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 129-133, and also Castignoli, "Il libro rosso"; Castagnoli, "La nazione".

the Netherlanders would request and be granted their own *fondaco*, no traces exist of the merchants themselves or the States General seeking such an institution.[34]

With no trading privileges set down in a collective charter or list of regulations, the traders themselves adopted an alternative strategy to improve their position, a solution which allowed them a great amount of flexibility. Over the years the collective of Netherlandish traders submitted a large number of *suppliche*, supplications or petitions, to the Venetian authorities. Petitions were an important means of communication between subjects and rulers in the early modern era. By submitting a petition supplicants could ask the government for favours or voice complaints, while the letters offered the state an insight into the concerns of the population, and a channel through which to dispense grace and justice.[35] Between 1589 and March 1651, the nation submitted 33 collective petitions, while 83 other supplications were presented by individual Netherlanders.[36] Individual Netherlandish merchants might make *ad hoc* requests related to their own businesses, asking for Venetian passes to safeguard their ships sailing to Iberian harbours in times of war between Spain and the Dutch Republic, or appealing for intervention in conflicts with Venetian magistrates, usually the tax officers.[37] But the collective of Netherlandish traders submitted petitions, which targeted larger issues in the interest of the whole group, such as tax exemptions for certain goods or specific trade routes. The content of these collective petitions shall be discussed further below. Although the merchants were competitors in Venetian-*Ponentine* trade, this was obviously outweighed by the benefits which could be gained through this collective effort.

Even though there are no sources, such as records of the nation's meetings, which provide information on the manner in which these petitions were drafted, it is possible to partially reconstruct this practice. All but two of the nation's requests have to do with business matters; the only exceptions were appeals to the Venetian judicial system, which shall be discussed in the

[34] ASV, CRD, b.12, 23 April 1606: Pellicorno tried in vain to sell German goods through the *Fondaco*; Poelhekke, "De Heilige Stoel", 212.
[35] See on the genre of the petition as a source for social history, the contributions in *International Review of Social History* 46 (2001) Supplement, especially Nubola, "Supplications" for the practice in early modern Italy.
[36] These petitions are found in the series *Collegio*, *Risposte di dentro*.
[37] For example, the requests in 1628 by Martin Hureau and Alvise Du Bois for Venetian passes for the voyage to Spain and back of the ship *San Giovanni Battista*, which they stated was built in the neutral German port of Lubeck, ASV, Collegio, Risposte di dentro, b.10, 3 August 1628, or the petition of Giacomo Stricher, who asked the *Collegio* to intervene on his behalf with the customs office: he had bought merchandise in Syria which he claimed he had wanted to sell on the isles of Zante and Cefalonia. Bad weather had forced his ship to sail directly to Venice, leaving him no other option than to sell his Levantine wares in the city, something the customs officers were unwilling to allow, ASV, Collegio, Rdd, b.30, 3 July 1639.

context of the nation as a social safety net.[38] The actual number of Netherlandish petitions must have been higher: the reports which the *Cinque Savi* produced in reply to these petitions, reveal that not all requests submitted to the Venetian state have been preserved in the *Collegio* administration. The first evidence of a petition for economic privileges presented by the Netherlandish nation, for instance, is found in a 1598 report by the *Cinque Savi*, but the original request is missing.[39]

It is unclear whether the nation convened regularly and how it was organized, but some information can be gleaned from the submitted petitions. Petitioners seldom signed their requests, because it was standard that they identify themselves clearly in the first part of their petition. The collective petitions of the Netherlanders, therefore, always refer to "la nazione fiamenga" and sometimes to the "università", which indicated a corporative organization, so it is unclear who actually formed part of the nation. In Livorno, by contrast, evidence exists which shows that the merchants enrolled in the nation by paying an entrance fee.[40] In Venice only four different documents exist, including the 1596 advice to the Senate, with signatures of members of the nation. In 1607 twenty-four merchants signed the appointment of a consul by the nation; in 1610 twenty-six traders added their names in support of a request to open up Venetian-Levantine trade to foreigners, while in 1615 twenty-eight signatures accompanied a letter of protest by the nation to the States General against the installation of a new consul, an incident which shall be discussed below in greater detail.[41] The number of merchants composing the nation fluctuated around twenty-five, which indicates that the core of resident Netherlandish traders joined their forces in these collective actions.

Details of the actual practice of presenting a petition can also be deduced from the reports by the *Cinque Savi* in reply to Netherlandish requests; for instance, at times *suppliche* were presented in person by the leaders of the nation: in 1651 three Netherlandish traders acting as

[38] ASV, CRD, b.10, 18 November 1597 and b.39, 22 June 1648.
[39] The Netherlandish merchants had appealed for lower customs duties for merchandise, mainly textile products, transported from the Low Countries by the overland route to Venice, ASV, VSM, Risposte, r. 140, c.11v-13v, 26 May 1598; c.23r, 26 August 1598; and c.70v, 15 January 1599 (m.v.). It does not seem to have been the practice to return petitions to the submitters, as was the case in the Netherlands when a request was not granted, cf. Van Nierop, "Popular participation".
[40] ASL, Statuti della nazione Olandese-Alemanna in Livorno, c.11ff.
[41] The consul appointment of 1607 can be found in ASV, NA, b.1199, 10 October 1608. See the 1610 petition in ASV, SM, f.187, 6 August 1610, and the letter to the States General in ASV, ST, f.213, 21 May 1615.

"capi della nazione" submitted a petition on behalf of the nation to the government.[42] They did not limit their endeavours to paper requests, but in addition sought to convince the *Cinque Savi* personally, as becomes clear from a report by the Venetian Board of Trade in 1618: "having understood more than once that what they [the Netherlandish nation] have wanted to communicate to us by word of mouth, and then also in writing".[43] Written petitions, therefore, could be preceded or accompanied by oral requests, and the nation, or its most important members, might have attempted to promote their interests by lobbying in the hallways of the Ducal Palace, among the Venetian patricians convened on the Piazza San Marco or at the *Cinque Savi*'s office at Rialto.

From examining the content of their petitions, it is uncertain whether the Netherlanders employed Venetian scribes to draft their letters of supplication. Still the petitions clearly had to conform to a certain standard and the words needed to be chosen carefully to convince the authorities of the importance of the request and the worthiness of the suppliants.[44] Besides the usual qualification of the petitioners as "devoted servants to the Venetian Republic", the requests show that the Netherlandish merchants used different strategies to voice their wishes and to try to convince the Venetian authorities. They often accentuated the important role their trade activities had in countering the decline of the Venetian marketplace, especially by calling attention to their trade in western commodities. A petition presented in 1634 is a case in point:

> How devotedly we Netherlandish merchants seek to attract the Ponentine ships, laden with the richest cargoes, to this city, [is something] Your Serenity can establish by looking at the continuous influx of arriving vessels, and even if the *piazza* has such disadvantages as are well-known, our desire and interest is that all the commerce of the world would be here in Venice.[45]

Well aware of the fact that the *Cinque Savi* would assess their requests and that one of the main concerns of this agency was the deteriorating position of Venice in international trade, the

[42] ASV, VSM, Risposte, b.24, 4 April 1651: "Giovanni de Valle, Giovanni Battista Nicolai e Giovanni Vanelst, capi della Nazione".
[43] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.144, c.163r-171r, 31 March 1618.
[44] Numerous scribes who offered to write petitions could be found in the vicinity of Rialto and Piazza San Marco, Infelise, *Prima dei giornali*, 21-22.
[45] ASV, CRD, b.26, 13 March 1634.

Netherlandish merchants were of course alluding to the better commercial circumstances in rival ports like Genoa and Livorno when they mentioned the disadvantages of the Venetian *piazza*. In fact, in their petitions they often promised that the requested privilege would increase traffic in Venice, underlining that this would consequently deflect trade from its main competitors, "with well-known benefits for the customs duties and convenience for the city".[46] Repeatedly they insisted that granting their requests would enable Venice to recapture part of its former commerce, despite the increasing quantities of Asian commodities that were being shipped to Europe via the ocean route and unloaded in other harbours.[47] In this manner they portrayed themselves as the essential link between Venice and the Atlantic trade centres, something which the *Cinque Savi* had no choice other than to recognize as being true.

The Netherlandish traders insisted on their loyal service to the Venetian Republic not only by calling attention to their efforts in increasing commerce, but also by accentuating their prompt payment of all necessary customs duties and their contributions to the provisioning of the Venetian navy in times of war, assistance which became particularly relevant in the years 1615-1618 when Venice was involved in skirmishes with Archduke Ferdinand of Styria and during the protracted struggle with the Ottoman Empire over the possession of Crete.[48] By doing so, the Netherlandish nation sought to demonstrate that they were part of Venetian society, if not by birth then certainly by their own choice and efforts. They also pointed to previously received favours and privileges from the Venetian government. This line of argument is explicitly taken in a petition submitted to the authorities in 1620, wherein the nation claims that it:

> has always been favoured by Your Serenity, and [treated] (…) as equal to Your native and true subjects, and [that our nation] has always looked to Your interests, and has defended and supported these with special care. Infinite is the evidence that we all - who for a long time have lived in this most Christian city with all our families, just as our fathers and forefathers have done - can give of the infinite and innumerable graces and favours, that we have received through the singular and incredible generosity of Your Serenity.[49]

[46] ASV, CRD, b.36, 7 November 1647.
[47] For example, ASV, CRD, b.20, 20 January 1629 (m.v.).
[48] ASV, CRD, b.23, 9 June 1632 and b.40, 26 January 1649 (m.v.).
[49] ASV, CRD, b.14, 19 July 1620.

Here the Netherlanders clearly sought to evoke a special and reciprocal alliance with the state, based, on the one hand, on their civic duties and long-term settlement in Venice, and, on the other, grounded in the just and benevolent treatment they had already received from the government.

This rhetoric of inclusion, however, was quickly abandoned in the next part of their petition when they started to explain their actual request. The merchants wanted the *Collegio* to put an end to the harassment of Netherlandish shipmasters by Venetian pilots, who were claiming pilotage dues and fines for non-compliance with a fifteenth-century law. This law, requiring all Venetian ships sailing home to take a pilot on board on the Istrian coast, was put into force in 1440, at a time, the nation reminded the authorities, when merchantmen from the Low Countries had not yet found their way to Venice. It could not apply to the Netherlandish vessels currently arriving in the Venetian harbour, they continued, because these usually called no more than once at Venice, and consequently the shipmasters could have no knowledge of the 1440 law nor know where exactly Istria was located. The Netherlanders adjusted their initial claim of being Venetians by choice and privilege in their attempt to be excluded from this particular part of Venetian legislation, insisting instead on their foreignness: the nation explained that the ships concerned were owned by Netherlanders and not Venetians, and did not carry any cargo belonging to Venetian citizens, "but only and exclusively merchandise of our Netherlandish nation".

At other times the nation did not seek stress their Venetianness at all, but instead opted to accentuate their exclusion and subaltern status in Venetian society. Underlying many requests for more trade privileges is the argument that other traders, particularly the German merchant community, profited from a better arrangement. In 1634 the nation appealed for a lower tax burden, arguing that no other group of merchants had to work under such disadvantageous circumstances as the Netherlanders.[50] Not only were they, as foreigners, obliged to pay 3.25 per cent more customs duties, they were denied access to Venetian-Levantine commerce as well, while the Germans, by contrast, were given many rights and tax exemptions connected to their overland trade.[51] This was particularly unfair since the German privileges were conceded to merchants from "Alemagna Alta, et Bassa" which, the nation argued, included the Netherlands,

[50] ASV, CRD b.25, 18 July 1634. See also ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.151, c.152v-155r, 8 March 1638.
[51] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.142, c.39v, 17 December 1607: following a Senate decision on 29 September 1579, foreigners paid 10% and Venetians 6 ¾% on commodities from the *Ponente*

since that region was also known as Lower Germany.[52] Netherlandish merchants should be awarded even more extensive exemptions, given that their home country was considerably more distant and they had to face far greater difficulties than the German traders to get their wares to Venice. Since the Netherlanders never actively sought their own *fondaco*, this perspective was probably chosen mostly for rhetorical purposes and served as one of a range of chords they would strike in their petitions.

A good example of how the nation successfully used the petitions to improve the general position of Netherlandish traders in Venice in the long term is provided by the requests for lower duties on western (*da Ponente*) merchandise. On 15 February 1651 the Venetian Senate decided to concede lower import customs duties for western goods, as requested by the Netherlandish nation, expressing the hope that it would contribute to maintaining a steady influx of ships and commodities despite the present turbulent times, with which they indicated the ongoing war with the Ottomans in the eastern Mediterranean.[53] The proposal was routinely passed, with all but one of the 95 senators present in the *Sala dei Pregadi* in the Ducal Palace being in favour. The plan to charge half the import duties on merchandise from western Europe for a period of four years was accepted easily enough because it was nothing new: the same privilege had first been granted in 1626 and from then on it had been periodically renewed. As in previous decades, the Netherlandish nation had presented their request for renewal just as the current four-year term was about to expire. In their petition to the *Collegio* the nation had not only pointed out the advantages that acceptance of their proposal would entail for the Venetian marketplace, but substantiated their appeal by calling attention to the previously granted privileges which "Your Serenity has renewed time and time again".[54] Interestingly enough, the initial plan to lower the customs duties on merchandise imported from western Europe had not been put forward by the Netherlandish nation at all, but by a Venetian spice merchant, one Antonio Pellizuoli.[55] Following his proposal, the *Cinque Savi* formulated a series of recommendations intended to help restore Venetian trade. According to their report, the competition from Livorno and Genoa had

[52] Charles V had united the seventeen Netherlandish provinces in a Burgundian Circle within the Holy Roman Empire in 1548, although in practice it was a separate entity.
[53] ASV, SM, filza February 1650 (m.v.).
[54] See their petition of 16 January 1651 in ASV, SM, filza February 1650 (m.v.) and also in CRD, b.41: "di tempo in tempo è stato prolongata dalla Serenità Vostra".
[55] Discussions of Pellizuoli's proposal are found in ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.147, c.11vff, 13 May 1626. For Pellizuoli as "spicier de droghe" at the shop *Imperator*, in Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2470, 11 August 1609.

reduced the Venetian revenue from export duties from circa 330,000 ducats to no more than 200,000 ducats a year. They agreed to lower the customs duties for merchandise being imported into Venice from western ports, including commodities like salted fish, but also pepper, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and indigo, signaling that by this time Venice had become completely dependent on others for the supply of spices.

The changing position of Venice in international maritime commerce, therefore, directly underlay the 1626 petition and the government's response.[56] Even though Pellizuoli the spice merchant, as the presentor of the proposal, had a direct interest in a steady supply of spices and pepper, obviously the principal benefits would go to international traders with contacts in Amsterdam and London. In subsequent years, in fact, it was the Netherlandish nation, sometimes in combination with the English, who asked that this particular privilege be extended. It might even be that Pellizuoli acted as a straw man for those foreign merchants involved in the spice trade, considering that the 1626 petition directly affected Venice's traditional trade policies. After all, it forced the Venetian state to face the fact that the city no longer functioned as the main European entrepôt for oriental wares. Such a proposal, completely contrary to the centuries-old idea of Venetian trade supremacy based on the spice trade, might be more readily accepted when presented by a Venetian subject instead of a group of foreign traders.[57] Once the initial request had been granted, the Venetian government regularly renewed the *Ponentine* privilege, at least down to 1660. The reports by the *Cinque Savi* always included the same arguments in favour of the arrangement, while the Netherlandish nation in their requests could point to an ever-growing list of precedent concessions.[58]

Sometimes the Netherlandish nation would join forces with the English merchants to obtain a mutually beneficial commercial privilege. In the same year Pellizuoli presented his proposal, the

[56] That lower customs duties for spices imported from western Europe were the main objective of the 1626 proposal becomes clear from subsequent related petitions, like the request in 1627 to include spices imported from Lisbon in the privilege extended to, amongst others, pepper, cloves, nutmeg, mace, cinnamon and indigo, following the proposal by Pellizuoli in 1626, ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.147, c.90vff, 31 March 1627.

[57] This method had been used in 1610 when the radical request to extend the economic privileges connected to Venetian citizenship to all immigrant merchants in Venice was presented, which is discussed below.

[58] See, for instance, ASV, CRD, b.22, 16 July 1631; VSM, Risposte, r.148, c.184r-186r, 30 August 1631; CRD, b.25, 13 November 1634; CRD, b.29, 15 December 1638; VSM, Risposte, r.151, c.203r-203v, 25 February 1638 (m.v.); CRD, b.35, 21 February 1644 (m.v.); VSM, Risposte, r.153, c.167v-168r, 21 April 1645; CRD, b.37, 12 December 1646; VSM, Risposte, r.154, c.56v, 27 June 1647; CRD, b.41, 16 January 1650 (m.v.); VSM, Risposte, r.155, c.163v-164r, 10 May 1660. The renewal of the ten-year charters of the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants followed a similar procedure, Ravid, "An introduction to the charters", 212-238.

Netherlandish and English merchants presented the *Collegio* with a request that involved one of the commodities already mentioned in the *ponentine* petition, i.e. salted fish from northern seas. This time they did not target the rates of import customs, but rather the existing regulations pertaining to the wholesale fish trade; they also demanded greater freedom to re-export any unsold quantities of *salumi*.[59] As an important source of protein with, moreover, a significant religious relevance, the trade in fish was subject to strict regulations.[60] The English and Netherlandish merchants complained that they were forced to report all cargoes of *salumi* and transactions involving fish, even the herring they had imported for their personal use or as presents for friends. They had to register their wares with the *Giustizia Vecchia*, the Venetian magistracy with special responsibility for the fish market and fishmongers. Also, the merchants were only allowed to sell the fish once it had been unloaded from their ships, a process that could take weeks. These procedures cost so much time that the merchants risked not being able to sell all their *salumi* in time for Lent, and since it was a product particularly vulnerable to decay, this meant that they would have to discard the unsold quantities.[61]

The two northern nations requested that the rules governing the wholesale trade in imported salted fish be liberalized, promising that this would greatly revive the trade, attracting large numbers of ships with cargoes worth hundreds of thousands of ducats. The *Cinque Savi* endorsed the viewpoint of the foreign traders and reported their findings to the Senate which decided to grant the privilege for two years. Again, this concession was renewed periodically over subsequent years.[62] By 1628 the *Cinque Savi* concluded that the salt-fish privileges were a success, attracting much larger quantities of fish from the northern seas than before; they reported that in 1621 and 1622 respectively 190 and 491 barrels of *sardelle* (pilchards) had been imported from the *Ponente*, while between 1626 and 1627 as many as 13,350 barrels arrived, together with quantities of caviar, salmon, and other types of fish.[63] The Venetian fishmongers' guild at times sought to re-impose stricter regulations on the wholesale trade in fish, but even when they

[59] ASV, CRD, b.17, 5 October 1626.
[60] See on the close regulation of fishing and the fish retail trade in Venice, Shaw, "Retail, monopoly".
[61] ASV, CRD, b.17, 5 October 1626.
[62] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.147, 51rff, 16 November 1626; CRD, b.18, 5 March 1627 and b.19, 14 October 1628; VSM, Risposte, r.148, c.20r-21r, 17 December 1628 and c.94v-95v, 20 February 1629 (m.v.); CRD, b.26, 13 March 1634, b.27, 23 December 1636, and b.30, 9 August 1639; VSM, Risposte, r.152, c.42r-44r, 24 September 1639. The only concession the merchants did not obtain from the Venetian government was the right to re-export the fish by land at the same low customs duties as by sea.
[63] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.148, c.20v-21r, 17 December 1628. Also VSM, Risposte, r.148, c.95r, 20 February 1629 (m.v.).

succeeded, the *Cinque Savi* were always sensitive to the arguments of the northern merchants. For instance, the magistrates decided in 1639 that while stricter rules were applicable to the trade in fish from Venetian territories, the commerce in *salumi* in the hands of the Netherlandish and English merchants should be completely free from interference by the guild. With too many obstacles in place, the *Cinque Savi* reported, northern traders preferred to sell their salted fish in Livorno and Genoa, leading to a great abundance of *salumi* in these harbours and shortages in Venice.[64]

The rate of success of the collective Netherlandish petitions seems to have been quite high. The *Cinque Savi* may have sometimes grumbled at the northerners' supplications and refused part of the submitted request, but most of the commercial privileges were granted or renewed. In contrast, the petitions submitted by Greek traders always ended up being dismissed by the Senate.[65] Only twice did the nation encounter an outright refusal. The first time was in 1610, when the Senate discussed a request, which entailed extending significant commercial privileges to all immigrant merchants in Venice. This plan aimed at obtaining collective economic citizenship rights for all foreign traders and therefore proved to be too radical. On 22 April, the secretary Paolo Santonini submitted a proposal to open up Levantine trade to non-Venetians, adding that this would be the only way for Venice to attract wealthy and enterprising immigrant traders, and compete with rival ports Marseille, Livorno, and Amsterdam.[66] Here the fact that a native citizen presented the initiative was clearly meant to make the drastic proposal more palatable to the Venetian magistrates, but obviously the main beneficiaries would be those foreign merchants already residing in Venice, eager to expand their commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire. In fact, the driving force behind the whole scheme were twenty-five Netherlandish merchants - among them the Van Castre brothers, Du Bois and Hureau, Melchior Noirot, and the Van der Put brothers - who added their own petition which stressed that this project would be the solution to the difficulties confronting Venetian commerce.[67]

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[64] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.152, c.43r, 24 September 1639.

[65] Fusaro, "Coping with transition", 63. These petitions were probably mostly aimed at the currant trade, which the Venetian state continued to defend against intruders.

[66] The petition is included in ASV, SM, f.187, 6 August 1610. See for a discussion of the 1610 proposal also Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini*, 139-146; Sella, "Il declino", 38-40; Schwarzenberg, *Ricerche sull' assicurazione*, 35-36.

[67] ASV, SM, f.187, undated document. The involvement of Netherlandish merchants is further illustrated by the letter, d.d. 14 May 1610, sent by Giovanni de Barlamont, who was temporarily absent from Venice. In his letter, De Barlamont explicitely voiced his support for Santonini's petition.

Even though Santonini's plan targeted an economic issue, the background for the subsequent discussion was formed by the clash between the two opposing currents in Venetian politics. Not surprisingly, the petition seems to have found support among the *Giovani*, the group of patricians intent on defending the Republic's independence against Spain and the papacy, and in favour of closer relations with England and the Dutch Republic. At least five of the six *Savi del Consiglio*, the most important Senate sub-committee responsible for handling issues relating to regular state business and foreign affairs, were in favour of the plan.[68] The 1610 proposal, however, also encountered fierce opposition among Venetian senators. For the more conservative members of the nobility granting all non-native traders *de facto* rights connected to the *cittadinanza de intus et extra* was a too drastic departure from traditional Venetian policies. Although four of the *Cinque Savi* had reacted positively to the proposal, the fifth, Vicenzo Dandolo, was firmly set against it.[69]

Dandolo, who had experience in the Levant trade, wrote a passionate report to the Senate, in which he not only warned against possible negative economic effects, but also sketched the religious dangers which the inclusion of heretic foreigners would entail.[70] They would marry "our daughters and female citizens" and set a bad example for their Venetian servants by not fasting during Lent and other religious feasts.[71] This was the only time that such religious as well as economic concerns were voiced by a member of the patriciate, something which in all probability was stimulated by the papal nuncio. Already worried because of the visit of the Dutch Ambassador Van der Mijle in 1609, the 1610 proposal further alarmed the nuncio. He wrote to the Vatican that he feared that economic motives would open the way for even more intense relations with the Protestant states and that he was doing his utmost to gather support to oppose a scheme with such dangerous religious consequences.[72]

As it turned out, the opponents to the scheme triumphed. The inclusion of a large group of wealthy, and possibly heterodox, foreigners into Venetian society with a simple stroke of the pen

[68] Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini*, 139-146.
[69] For the positive reaction of four of the *Savi*, ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.142, c.186r-188r, 5 July 1610. Dandolo had been ill and only reacted two months later, r.143, c.1v-2v, 2 August 1610.
[70] For Dandolo's economic activities, see Gullino, "I patrizi veneziani", 415-417.
[71] ASV, VSM, r.143, c.2r: "per me non credo che si potesse far cosa piu perniciosa piu dannosa, et piu pericolosa di questa introduttione nella citta, che professo di esser in tutto catolica, (...) a doversi miscolar con nostri cittadini, apparentarsi con le nostre figlie et nostre cittadine. (...) et che essempio potra haver la servitu che teniranno, e tutte quelli che li praticheranno nella quadragesima et nei giorni santi".
[72] Nuncio Gessi claimed that the Venetian patricians "si fondano sull'utile della piazza et senza pensare ad altro rispetto vogliono accettare ogni partito che la sostenti et accresca", as cited by Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini*, 140.

would have fundamentally changed and destabilized not just the economic, but also the religious and social relations in the Republic.[73] In the end the Senate accepted a watered-down version of Santonini's initial plan, deciding that foreigners would be allowed access to the Levant only when they used Venetian ships. Given the crisis of Venetian shipping, this adaptation made the change in legislation virtually meaningless, as the Netherlandish merchants were quick to point out. The Venetian government, they said in a letter to the Senate, was holding them captive by forcing them to use Venetian vessels, which were slower and more vulnerable than their own ships, adding that they humbly wished to communicate to the Senate that the granted privilege was now worthless.[74] In subsequent years, the Netherlanders continued submitting petitions targeting smaller, more well-defined commercial privileges.

The second time the Netherlanders met a refusal was when they petitioned to have the silk export privilege renewed in March 1640. Yet this time they would prevail. The Netherlandish nation obtained privileges concerning not only the import of Ponentine goods, but also regarding the export of Mediterranean commodities, such as the duty-free overland export of Levantine raw silk, which they had first requested in 1614.[75] Before 1640, the Netherlanders had succeeded in including in the privilege the export of not only raw silk, but also that of manufactured silks from the Terraferma, and it was this last concession that the Venetian authorities were unwilling to extend.[76] The merchants countered the decision with a new petition in May 1640, requesting that the privilege be renewed in its entirety. They strengthened their claims as usual by pointing out precedents, stating that they had been granted this privilege since August 1632 and that they could not understand why this time it should be any different. But in addition they employed another strategy, threatening what was essentially an economic boycott of the Terraferma textile industry, stating that the refusal of their earlier petition had caused them to cancel all their orders for the silk mills of Vicenza, Verona, and Bassano, since export of silken fabrics by land with the current high risks made no sense at all.[77] The threat proved effective, and the following month

[73] Cozzi, "Fra Paolo Sarpi", 147.
[74] ASV, SM, f.187, undated document.
[75] ASV, VSM, Risposte, 30 June 1627. See above, Chapter 3, 83-86.
[76] ASV, CRD, b.31, 1 March 1640; ASV, VSM, Risposte, 13 March 1640.
[77] ASV, CRD, b.31, 7 May 1640.

the *Cinque Savi* changed their opinion, informing the Senate that, all things considered, duty-free export of silk fabrics by sea would be advantageous.[78]

The supplication of May 1640 was one of the very few instances where the Netherlandish nation adopted a more threatening tone. In 1643, when the war in Germany no longer hampered trade, the Netherlandish merchants, not wishing to relinquish their acquired rights, changed their approach when they asked for a complete renewal of the silk privileges. They stated that a positive decision would be a token of recognition by the Venetian government that notwithstanding the difficulties of the present times, by which they referred to the plague epidemic of 1629-1631 and the Thirty Years' War, the Netherlandish merchants had tried their best to maintain a prosperous commerce ("negotio assai florido") in Venice, and even attempted to expand it. A renewed privilege would only increase their desire to continue to do so.[79] Needless to say, the *Cinque Savi* were particularly sensitive to this argument and, after having informed themselves that the previously conceded privilege had indeed had positive effects on the *piazza*, they advised its prolongation, echoing in their report the wording of the Netherlandish petition when they expressed the hope that the Netherlanders would continue to endeavour to let trade prosper ("più floridi negoti").[80]

Banquets and charity

Lobbying for trade privileges was undoubtedly the most important, but not the only activity of the nation. A week before his death in the plague-year 1631, the merchant Giovanni van Mere made some alterations to his testament. One of the changes he made in a codicil, written in his own, already weakened hand, was the retraction of a bequest of 130 ducats. In his will written four years earlier, Van Mere had intended the sum to be spent on a banquet in his memory, organized for "the merchants of our nation".[81] Why he retracted this particular legacy is unclear. Had he fallen out with his fellow countrymen? Or maybe it made little sense to organize a dinner in the plague-stricken and deserted city? Whatever his motives may have been, Van Mere's will

[78] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.151, 23 July 1640. For the involvement of the Netherlandish merchants in the Terraferma textile production, see Vianello, *Seta fine*, 109-110.
[79] ASV, CRD, b.35, 15 December 1643.
[80] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.153, c.104r, 30 January 1643 (m.v.).
[81] ASV, NT, b.756 for his testament dated 8 September1627 and the codicil dated 28 April 1631: "Anullo il legato fatto alla natione per un banchetto".

clearly points out that, even though in this particular case the communal dinner in memory of one of the nation's members never took place, the *nazione fiamminga* in Venice was wont to convene on social occasions.

From the civic militias and neighbourhoods in the Dutch Republic to the *Nicolotti* and *Castellani* factions that divided the Venetian population, corporate dinners were a common way for different types of early modern associations to express and reinforce their solidarity.[82] Communal banquets, aside from being festive occasions that could sometimes go on for days, also had an important symbolic meaning, expressing the participants' internal cohesion, peacefulness, and unity. The well-documented stay of Ambassador Johan Berck, who was in Venice between 1622 and 1627, shows that social contacts between a representative of the Dutch Republic and the collective of Netherlandish traders were intense, and frequently took the form of a dinner.[83] For instance, on 30 October 1623, the ambassador threw a dinner party for the Netherlandish nation, which the merchants reciprocated one month later with a banquet for the ambassador, his wife, and members of the nation at the house of the trader Van Ceulen.[84]

In between official diplomatic affairs, the agenda of the ambassador was filled with get-togethers and social gatherings involving the merchants. Of course, on these social occasions entertainment and business could coincide: when Berck, accompanied by most of the members of the nation, went to greet the newly arrived English ambassador Isaac Wake in January 1625, the presence of the Netherlandish merchants increased the size of Berck's entourage, lending an extra touch of prestige to the Dutch embassy.[85] Their attendance would surely not have been purely ceremonial. As petitions submitted to the *Collegio* in subsequent years show, the English and Netherlandish merchants often had coinciding economic interests, particularly concerning the trade in salted fish mentioned above. Maybe commercial issues were discussed on this occasion or the meeting was used to pave the way for future cooperation.[86]

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[82] For the communal celebrations of the civic militias in the cities of Holland, see Knevel, *Burgers*, 297-307; for the sumptuous neighbourhood festivities in Haarlem, which could go on for three days, Dorren, *Het soet vergaren*, 43-46. On the factional banquets in Venice, Davis, *The war*, 81, 125-127.

[83] Andreas Colvius, the ambassador's chaplain, kept a journal covering the entire mission. Two copies of the journal exist; one in the National Archives in The Hague and one in the library of the university of Ghent, which has been used here: RUG, Handschriftenbibliotheek nr.1473, "Cort verhael".

[84] RUG, Handschriftenbibliotheek nr.1473, "Cort verhael", c.37v.

[85] The ambassadors' retinue was often increased on official occasions by the presence of compatriots, which in Venice could consist of the resident merchants, travelling gentlemen or Netherlandish students from Padua, Heringa, *De eer*, 141-143.

[86] RUG, Handschriftenbibliotheek nr.1473, "Cort verhael", c.37r-38r, 54r.

Festive meals were not organized just because an ambassador was present. Berck participated in several festivities which the Netherlandish traders were used to celebrate annually. Martin Hureau, for instance, invited Berck to his annual New Year's dinner on 7 February in 1624, and again on 7 January in 1627.[87] On 16 May 1624, Ascension Day, Berck attended *La Sensa*, the most prominent of Venetian feasts. It enacted the ritual marriage of the doge to the Adriatic Sea and was elaborately celebrated with a vast spring festival and a fifteen-day fair. The marital ceremony took place at sea and each year thousands of boats and gondolas with Venetians and foreign visitors followed the *Bucintoro*, the ceremonial galley of the doge, out to the harbour entrance at San Nicolò to witness the spectacle that symbolized Venetian dominance over the seas.[88] After having taken part in this aquatic procession, the doge and senators convened at the Ducal Palace for their traditional ceremonial meal, while Berck had himself rowed to the island of Murano, where he participated in the annual banquet of the Netherlandish nation on the occasion of *La Sensa*.[89]

The Netherlandish nation probably celebrated this quintessentially Venetian feast-day among compatriots at the house of one of its members on Murano. It was not unusual for immigrants in Venice to organize their own festivities on the occasion of a Venetian festival. For example, during the Venetian carnival of 1517, the German traders put on elaborate entertainments to celebrate having obtained trading rights with Trieste. On Giovedì Grasso, they "sponsored jousts, bull chases, battles between dogs and a bear, a transvestite ballet, and an allegorical pageant in the courtyard of their warehouse".[90] Even though the banquets of the Netherlandish nation seem to have been much more low-key events, these regular festive occasions would have been opportunities to further cement the mutual connections among this relatively small group of foreigners from the same region.

The cohesion among the Netherlandish traders was not expressed exclusively in the form of banquets and feasts. Their nation also provided assistance to the needy. In Livorno, a charity fund was created from the members' fees, the exact amount of which was left to the merchants' own discretion. Every year on the day of Saint Andrew, the patron saint of the Burgundian Netherlands, all members had to pay an additional sum of four *lire* and the cashbox was further

[87] RUG, Handschriftenbibliotheek nr.1473, "Cort verhael", c.37r-38r, 67v.
[88] For a description of the celebration of *La Sensa*, Muir, *Civic ritual*, 119-134; Casini, "Cerimoniali", 114-118.
[89] Bardi, *Delle cose notabili*, 260: "restano i senatori a disnar col Doge in segno d' allegrezza, & di festa di cotal sposalitio".
[90] Muir, *Civic ritual*, 166.

replenished by donations made by visiting Netherlanders. For example, on the saint's name day of 30 November 1646 the merchant Henrico de Haze, who was passing through Livorno, courteously made a substantial donation "without even counting the coins". The collected money was initially meant to finance the building of the nation's chapel, but the funds were also used to provide a safety net for Netherlanders in Livorno and could be called upon to pay for medical aid and poor relief for those in need.[91]

Whether there was a collective charity fund in Venice unfortunately remains unclear, but signs of collective solidarity do exist. As mentioned above, the nation twice made a collective request in support of a compatriot or somebody closely connected to the nation. In 1597 the nation requested pardon for a courier, who had violated Venetian law when transporting money from Augsburg to Venice. The nation stated that the courier had done so unintentionally: he had narrowly escaped an attack by bandits and had been so distracted that he had forgotten all about the regulations for importing foreign currency into Venetian territory, neglecting to register the sum of cash he was transporting. The nation pleaded with the Venetian state to return the money and release the courier, stressing that they knew the poor man for his sincerity and innocence. They added that they hoped that the government would be as clement as they had been "on different occasions to others to whom our nation is not inferior". Obviously, adding to the willingness of the nation to put its weight behind the request to pardon the courier was the fact that Netherlandish merchants were the intended recipients of the sum he was bringing in from their contacts in Augsburg.[92]

In 1648, the Netherlanders, as usual, invoked their earlier contributions to the Venetian economy and state in a petition, but again their aim was not to obtain any commercial favours for the collective of merchants, but clemency on behalf of an individual. This time they interceded with the Venetian justice system on behalf of a fellow countryman who had been condemned to death. A certain Dorico di Darico from Brabant, probably a sailor or maybe a shipmaster, had violated the severe Venetian quarantine laws and had been sentenced by the *Sanità*. In their letter, which the Netherlandish nation started and ended by reminding the government of their contributions to the customs duties and the forty ships they had provided for the war against the

[91] ASL, Statuti della nazione Olandese-Alemanna in Livorno, c.17-24.
[92] ASV, CRD, b.10, 18 November 1597. The courier should have consigned the sum of money to the Venetian authorities upon his arrival in Mestre, where the brothers Nichetti, who were expecting the sum, would then have collected it.

Ottomans, they explained that Dorico had trespassed only because of his complete ignorance of the strict quarantine regulations which did not exist in his homeland. He had admitted his wrongdoings to the *Sanità*, not knowing the severity of his actions and unaware that by doing so he was signing his own death sentence. It is unclear whether the Venetian state heeded their request, but the petition is a sign of how the nation tried to be of assistance to compatriots in dire circumstances.

That individual traders from the Low Countries could fall back on the communal support of the nation has already been demonstrated by the case of Cornelis Jansen. Not only did he enjoy hospitality and commercial advice from the resident Netherlandish merchants in Venice, a type of assistance they commonly extended to compatriots passing through; they also rallied to his defence with their testimonies when he appealed against a decision made by a Venetian court of law. Sometimes the nation's help took on an even more concrete form, as in the case of the merchant Gieronimo van Enden. Van Enden was imprisoned in 1635 because of a debt of 2,300 ducats he owed the Venetian Republic. After having spent seven months in jail, he asked the state for clemency, claiming that he had run into financial troubles during the plague epidemic and that other misfortunes had dried up his trade with Danzig and the Low Countries. He pleaded to be released from prison and proposed to redeem his debts through a deferred payment scheme which would start immediately with a hundred ducats, donated to him for this purpose by the Netherlandish nation.[93]

The nation also provided financial assistance in a more everyday manner. Its members could borrow money from each other at a special interest rate. For instance, when Alvise du Bois and Guglielmo Tilmans dissolved their partnership in 1630, Du Bois had to pay his business partner 12,359 ducats at the low interest rate of 5 per cent "as is observed among the nation".[94] The Italian *Monti di Pietà*, credit institutions designed as an alternative to Jewish bankers, applied the same rate, which did little more than cover administrative costs. The rates charged by Jewish banks in Venice could range from 12 per cent - a rate which according to the Jews yielded very small profits - to 25 per cent, while in 1519-20 black-market rates at Rialto reached as high as 40-50 per cent.[95] The lending of money at such low rates among the Netherlandish merchants

[93] ASV, CRD, b.25, 28 January 1634 (m.v.).
[94] ASV, NA, b.10798, c.279v, 22 May 1638: "con l' interesse, come frà la natione si osserva di cinque percento".
[95] For these rates: Pullan, "The Jewish banks", 60-61, 68-70. On interest rates in the Dutch Republic, see Gelderblom and Jonker, "Completing a financial revolution", 647-648.

shows that the nation conformed to another common practice within specific mercantile or religiously defined communities. In the first decades of the seventeenth century, for example, trustworthy members of the Mennonite community in Amsterdam could get substantial loans from the extra money in the alms chest, again at a 5 per cent rate of interest.[96] Although the Netherlandish nation in Venice was not a distinct religious organization or formally structured, it did engender enough trust among its members to provide similar mutual financial support. Basically, the nation served as a point of reference for Netherlanders in need who, as Van Enden expressed in his supplication, were unable to count on the help of family and friends living far away, in their native lands. If a compatriot ran into trouble in Venice, the community of Netherlandish traders could be counted upon to offer assistance, either by interceding with the Venetian government in the form of petitions or offering supportive testimonies in Venetian law courts.

Ambassadors and consuls

The collective of Netherlandish merchants in Venice was undoubtedly most visible when they received envoys of the United Provinces. The entire nation would set out in their gondolas to meet the diplomat and his entourage upon their arrival and accompany them into the city. They would also be present at the official reception by the doge and Senate in the Palazzo Ducale. But what exactly was the relationship between the representatives, both ambassadors and consuls, of the Dutch Republic and the merchants of the Netherlandish nation in Venice? Israel has argued that the States General started to send out a wave of representatives to the Mediterranean after 1609 with the intent of turning the merchant communities into "a genuine extension of the Dutch state and Dutch society".[97] Whether this was indeed the aim of the States General is debatable, but certainly the consolidation and expansion of maritime trade and shipping between the Dutch Republic and the Mediterranean in the first decades of the seventeenth century required commercial representation in the southern ports.

[96] Sprunger, "Entrepreneurs and ethics", 219. See also Mathias, "Risk, credit and kinship".
[97] Israel, "The Dutch merchant colonies", 93: "a start was made at building up a specifically Dutch network under the control and supervision of the Dutch Protestant state" and "While the main purpose of both consuls and factors was to promote trade, the States General (…) were anxious that the merchant colonies in the Mediterranean, albeit consisting mainly at this stage of Catholic Flemings and Brabanters, should, under the supervision of the consuls, become a genuine extension of the Dutch state and Dutch society".

The signing of the Twelve Years' Truce on 9 April 1609 gave the United Provinces the opportunity to send out official diplomatic envoys to the capital cities of other states: even before the year was over the first official representative of the States General had arrived in Venice. Cornelis van der Mijle, son-in-law of the pensionary of Holland, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, was the first emissary of the United Provinces ever to be sent abroad with the rank of ambassador, and Venice was an obvious choice as destination.[98] With the Interdict crisis only recently defused and anti-Habsburg sentiments prevailing among the patrician faction of the *Giovani*, the Venetian state seemed a candidate *par excellence* to enter into diplomatic relations with the nascent Dutch Republic.[99] Van der Mijle's official instructions were to inform the Venetian Republic of the recently concluded truce and to communicate the willingness of the United Provinces to establish bonds of friendship, and increase trade and shipping relations.

On 18 November he presented his credentials to the doge in the *Sala del Collegio* and three days later he delivered a speech to the *Collegio* in which he explained his mission (Ill.5.1). Although Van der Mijle failed to secure a commercial treaty with the Venetians, Henry Wotton remarked that the United Provinces had succeeded in having "their independency (…) acknowledged by this Seigniory, though not declaratively, yet at least tacite, in the outward declarations".[100] Throughout his stay Van der Mijle was treated with all the honours befitting the representative of an independent state, even being granted the distinction that the doge, upon receiving the letters of credence, left them unopened as a symbol of good faith, instead of having them read out loud by a secretary.[101] Indeed, even though Venice had not been willing to enter into any official agreement regarding trade with the Dutch Republic, and had been even less inclined to form a political alliance, the three-week stay of Van der Mijle in Venice could be termed a success: with his reception by the Venetian government the Republic of the United Provinces was officially acknowledged as a sovereign state for the first time.[102]

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[98] Dutch envoys were already present in France and England, but were only acknowledged as full ambassadors after the Truce, Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 405. For a biography of Van der Mijle, see Van der Vecht, *Cornelis van der Myle*, the mission to Venice on pages 16-39. His instruction by the States General is included as Appendix IV to De Jonge, *Nederland en Venetië*, who also gives a description of Van der Mijle's mission.

[99] Poelhekke, "De Heilige Stoel", 195-197. It seems that the idea of a diplomatic mission to Venice, first proposed by Stadholder Maurits to the States General on 25 August 1609, was instigated by the Huguenot leader Philippe du Plessis Mornay, who hoped that by establishing contacts between the Italian state and the northern Protestant powers, Venice eventually could be won over to the Protestant camp.

[100] As cited by Heringa, *De eer*, 262.

[101] NA The Hague, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.05, Bijlagen, no.8313, "Rapport of Verbael van de Heer Cornelis van der Mijle van zijne Ambassade naar Venetien, 1609".

[102] Poelhekke, "De Heilige Stoel"; De Jonge, *Nederland en Venetië*, 3-51.

Netherlandish traders formed part of Van der Mijle's entourage upon his arrival and official entrance in Venice, welcoming him as they would his successors in subsequent years. François van Aerssen, who arrived in 1620, was, like Van der Mijle, an ambassador *extraordinaris* sent on a short-term mission.[103] He was followed by two resident ambassadors, Johan Berck (1622-1627) and Willem van Lyere (1627-1636).[104] The main goal of the ambassadors was political: although Van der Mijle had failed to establish a political alliance, in subsequent years the two republics found mutual interest in their anti-Habsburg policy and entered into a coalition. On the last day of 1619, as the Twelve Years' Truce was drawing to an end, Venice and the Dutch Republic signed an agreement in which they promised to support one another, if one party were to enter into war with the Habsburg powers.[105]

The main job of the resident ambassadors Berck and Van Lyere was to maintain the alliance, which boiled down to continuously reminding Venice of its financial obligations to the war effort of the United Provinces. They were also specifically instructed not to pursue the topic of a commercial treaty concerning Adriatic trade, which had been so resolutely refused by the Venetian state in 1609.[106] Neither was the Netherlandish nation officially placed under the control of the Dutch ambassador. Instead, creating advantageous commercial circumstances was entirely left to the collective effort of the resident traders, and not to official diplomatic channels. This does not conform with the suggestion that the ambassadors were sent out with the specific aim of controlling the merchant community. The ambassadors, however, did extend their protection to individual merchants, as happened in 1631 when Daniel Nijs went bankrupt and took refuge from his creditors in the residence of Van Lyere, bringing along a large quantity of valuable merchandise.[107] At the same time certain traders assisted the ambassadors in a number of practical matters. For example, on the request of Johan van der Veken in Rotterdam, his business correspondent, fellow-Antwerp émigré, and family member, Melchior Quingetti hired a

[103] De Jonge, *Nederland en Venetië*, 416.
[104] Schutte (ed.), *Repertorium*, 460-461. Cf. Israel, "The Dutch merchant colonies", 96, who sees a contraction in the States General's posting of representatives in Southern Europe after 1621.
[105] The support would consist of financial assistance of 50,000 guilders a month or an equivalent of ships and troops, De Jonge, *Nederland en Venetië*, 102-113; Geyl, *Christofforo Suriano*, passim; De Jong, *'Staat van oorlog'*, 327-332. For the Venetian diplomats in the Dutch Republic and their role in the treaty, see Blok, *Relazioni veneziane*.
[106] See the instruction to Van der Mijle: "Soo verre yet by den hertoch ofte senaat wert gemoveert tegen de vryheyt van den coophandel van de geuniëerde vrye Nederlanden in de Golpho, den ambassadeur sal hem excuseren daervan in eenige handelinge te treden als nyet gelast synde, noch en sal selver daervan geen openinge doen", in De Jonge, *Nederland en Venetië*, 416. The instructions for Van der Mijle's successors are included in De Jonge's appendices VI, IX, and X.
[107] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.148, c.160r, 19 May 1631.

Venetian house for Van der Mijle. Quingetti was the ambassador's contact in Venice for financial transactions as well.[108]

Between Van der Mijle's departure and Van Aerssen's arrival another representative from the Dutch Republic appeared on the scene, with a mission much more closely related to trade and shipping, and who would therefore have a bigger impact on the lives of the resident Netherlandish traders. Gillis (Egidio) Ouwercx reached Venice at the start of 1615. He had been appointed consul by the States General on 6 November of the previous year, with the task of assisting those "merchants, traffickers, and shipmasters of these lands" who were involved in trade and shipping in Venice.[109] His appointment caused considerable upheaval among the Netherlandish merchants and is worth looking into more closely, because the resulting conflict was instrumental in the development of Dutch consular jurisdiction in early modern Italy. Ouwercx had presented himself in the Venetian Senate two days after his arrival in the city and had been received with all the necessary courtesy. However, as he explained in a letter to the States General on 13 February 1615, the confirmation of his post by the Senate had just that morning been suspended after a group of Netherlandish merchants had intervened.[110] This led Israel to conclude that Catholic Southern Netherlanders professing loyalty to Archduke Albert, the ruler of the Habsburg Netherlands, had attempted to block Ouwercx' installation as consul representing the Republic of the United Provinces.

Israel interpreted the incident as a clash of political and religious allegiances among the Netherlanders.[111] However, instead of being a disagreement fought along lines of nationality and a sign of resistance against the growing power of the Protestant Dutch state, the dispute arose from conflicting ideas about the exact duties of a consul. The traders feared that Ouwercx would assert jurisdiction over their transactions and would levy consular fees. They argued that they did not see the need for a new consul since for years Giulio di Franceschi, a Venetian citizen whose

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[108] *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal, 1607-1609*, 783, note 4; De Roy van Zuydewijn, *Van koopman*, 102-103: Melchior was a half-brother of Johanna Quingetti, the wife of Van der Veken.

[109] Ouwercx's background remains unclear. For his appointment by the States General on 5 November 1614, see *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal, 1613-1616*, 348. Also included in Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 52-53.

[110] Ouwercx' letter is included in Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 55-57; for the positive advice on the appointment of a Dutch consul in Venice by the *Cinque Savi*, see ASV, VSM, b.24, 30 January 1615. This *busta* also includes an Italian translation of his appointment by the States General, a copy of which can also be found in ASV, ST, f.213.

[111] Israel, "The Dutch merchant colonies", 93 and note 28. Cfr. Geyl, *Christofforo Suriano*, 355-358.

family had been involved in trade with the Low Countries, had assisted seamen and shipmasters from the Low Countries in their dealings with Venetian institutions as consul.[112] Twenty-four merchants and close to thirty shipmasters elected him in 1607 because increased shipping with Holland, Zeeland, and neighbouring regions called for an intermediary who spoke Italian as well as Dutch, and who had the necessary knowledge of Venetian commercial practices. For a fee of two ducats per ship, Di Francesci would assist shipmasters with the procedures of the *Sanità*, the payment of anchorage duties, the hiring of barges to load and unload the Netherlandish merchantmen, and help in their dealings with the *Cinque Savi* and other Venetian magistracies. Before accepting Ouwercx as their new consul, the Netherlandish merchants wanted to have a clearer idea of the instructions given to him by the States General, and wanted assurance that he would not interject himself in their commercial affairs before the Venetian Senate. Adding force to their arguments, they accused Ouwercx of having obtained his commission illegitimately and of not being qualified for the job since he was no more than a lowly ship's clerk.

In his letter to the States General, the frustrated consul countered these accusations by insisting that the opposing merchants were subjects of Archduke Albert and therefore had no standing at all to protest against his nomination by the Dutch Republic. In an explanation written to the Venetian Senate, besides indignantly pointing out that he did have enough education to merit the job, Ouwercx used the same argument, clarifying that he sought to act exclusively in the interest of subjects of the States General.[113] The question of nationality, then, was raised by the provoked consul and not by the traders themselves. They did not question Ouwercx' jurisdiction as a consul in Venice simply because they considered themselves to be subjects of a state other than the Dutch Republic, even though most of them originally hailed from the Southern Netherlands. Rather, the traders themselves appealed to the States General on 21 February, explaining that their concern was that Ouwercx would try to extend his authority beyond the

[112] Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2156, dated 24 January 1608, when De Franceschi registered his election of the previous year at a notary. On the same day as his election as Netherlandish consul, the exact same group of traders, but a different assembly of shipmasters chose De Franceschi in an identical function for vessels coming from the ports of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Danzig, Ibidem, no.2300; Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 57. De Franceschi had already been performing services for seamen from the Netherlands at least two years before his election. See for his father's commercial contacts with Antwerp and his status as Venetian citizen Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.976; for De Franceschi acting as interpreter and agent for Netherlandish seamen before his appointment, see, for example, Ibidem, nos.1408; 1559; 1697.

[113] Ouwercx' letter to the States General on 13 and 20 February 1615 and his retort against the accusations levelled at him in Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 56-58.

Netherlandish shipmasters and seamen to the merchants and their merchandise.[114] The letter was signed by 27 merchants, including many who originally came from the Southern Netherlands but who, like Melchior Noirot, Daniel Nijs, and the brothers Giacomo and Pietro Gabri, also had business partners and family in the United Provinces.

That the incident affected merchants in the Dutch Republic as well, and thus was not simply a conflict between Northern and Southern Netherlanders, becomes even more apparent from the resolution taken by the States General on 2 March. A group of Amsterdam-based merchants trading with Venice, undoubtedly informed of the situation by their correspondents in the Italian city-state, had also submitted a complaint, stating that they had initially requested that Ouwercx should be appointed. He had, however, tried to exceed the boundaries of his position, since he was supposed to do no more than De Franceschi had been doing in the previous years. The States General agreed and defined the consul's duties more sharply, declaring that under no circumstances was he to assert any influence over "those merchants from these lands, any of their goods or commodities", a decision that was also sent to the Venetian Senate who subsequently confirmed Ouwercx' appointment on 21 May.[115] If Ouwercx had intended to assert any rights over the resident Netherlandish merchants, he now had to back down: the Senate explicitly referred to the petition submitted by the Netherlandish traders and stipulated the consul's duties as specified by the merchants and laid down by the States General.[116]

The faltering start of Ouwercx' consulate shows that in this particular period the function of commercial consul had as yet not been clearly delineated. The Venetian consulate was among the first wave of Dutch consular appointments in Mediterranean harbours: the first representative nominated by the States General was Johan van Daelhem in Livorno in 1612, while the next year

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[114] Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 58. Strangely enough, the letter is written in Italian, which led Heeringa to conclude that it was addressed to the Venetian state, but from the content it becomes clear that it was meant for the States General (here referred to as "V.V. S.S. Illustrissime et Eccellentissime", which was one of the Italian forms of address for the States General, Heringa, *De eer*, 265-266) whom the merchants asked to send further explanations concerning Ouwercx' duties.

[115] Unfortunately, no trace has been found of the original request by the Amsterdam merchants to instate a consul. For the States General's resolution of 7 March 1615, see *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal, 1613-1616*, 407. Also included in Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 59-60, who mistakenly dated it 17 March. An Italian copy of the resolution can be found in ASV, ST, f.213 and VSM, nuova serie, b.24.

[116] ASV, ST, f.213, 21 May 1615. The Senate unanimously voted for the appointment of Ouwercx, and defined his role as follows: that the "said Egidio Ouwercx may not in any way exercise or extend his commission to the merchants or merchandise of these countries", but that his job as consul was to defend and assist seamen of Netherlandish ships. He was to be paid two ducats for each incoming ship. Ouwercx sent a letter to the States General on the 26th of the next month, stating that he would exercise his clearly defined commission punctually and promptly, Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 60.

other consuls were appointed to the ports of Aleppo and Larnaca, followed by Venice (1614-1615), Genoa (1615), and Algiers (1616).[117] The origins of the commercial consulates lay in the Middle Ages, when the consul was chosen by a society of traders to represent their interests with the local authorities and to resolve any internal disputes relating to maritime trade.[118] In Venice, the Netherlandish merchants had adapted this particular institution to their needs when they chose De Franceschi as consul in 1607.[119]

Ouwercx' arrival, therefore, clashed with an arrangement that had been serving the Netherlandish traders in Venice for years. Even though his appointment was instigated by merchants in the Dutch Republic with contacts in Italy, the Netherlanders in Venice were afraid the changeover would be to their disadvantage, leading to more extensive rights of the consul over Venetian-Netherlandish commerce. Similar collisions between consuls chosen by the community of resident traders and those appointed by the Dutch state occurred in Livorno and Genoa, showing that this indeed was a transition from one system of representation to another.[120] The Ouwercx episode cannot be taken as a demonstration of the increasing power of the Dutch state over the Netherlandish merchants in Venice. The trading nation delayed Ouwercx' official recognition by the Venetian state and had his duties more clearly defined and curtailed by the States General. Through petitions and by effectively mobilizing their contacts in the United Provinces, the Netherlanders in Venice could influence the States General's policies. Once the issue of consular jurisdiction had been sorted out and Ouwercx had been appointed, his commission continued to serve as a model for the description of the duties of consuls in other Mediterranean ports in the following years.[121]

Ouwercx stayed on in Venice for almost a decade, until 1624, but his relations with the Netherlandish merchants were never frictionless. When Ambassador Van Aerssen arrived in

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[117] For Livorno, Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 125-129 and Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 51-54.
[118] Müller, *Consuls*, 75-76.
[119] After the appointment of Ouwercx, De Franceschi continued to perform his duties as consul for Hamburg, Lubeck, and Danzig, ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.144, c.74v-75r, 30 April 1616. His nephew would take over this position after his retirement, see ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.151, c.118r, 18 September 1637.
[120] Engels, *Merchants, interlopers*, 125-127. For Dutch consuls in the Mediterranean in general, see Trampus, "La formazione"; Biagi, "Note", 12; Klein, *De Trippen*, 312-314. For a comparison of Dutch and Venetian consuls, and, for a comparison of the Venetian, Dutch, English, and French consulate systems in the Ottoman part of the Mediterranean, Steensgaard, "Consuls".
[121] Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 53, note 2; *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal, 1619-1620*, 275, 279; Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 65-67. Consuls in the Ottoman Empire had a much more extensive jurisdiction, serving as they did as intermediaries between the foreign merchants and the Islamic legal system, see Boogert, "Tussen consul en qâdî".

Venice, the Netherlandish nation appeared before him a couple of times, first *en corps* and then represented by delegates, to complain about the consul.[122] Again the point of contention was the scope of his jurisdiction. Van Aerssen observed that there was also some envy and jealousy behind the grievances of the merchants, caused by the considerable earnings Ouwercx was pocketing from additional services he provided to arriving shipmasters, such as collecting the freightage from their Venetian-based freighters and providing them with return cargoes.[123]

Van Aerssen was right: Ouwercx' brokerage activities were contested. In February of that same year a series of accusations by shipmasters against Ouwercx had been submitted to the *Giudici del Forestier*, a Venetian law court concerned with disputes among foreigners, as well as between foreigners and Venetians. The protests, which were registered with the notary Piccini, were almost identical. For example, Raynart Evertsen, the shipmaster of the *Naranzer*, complained on 14 February 1620 that Ouwercx instead of assisting him was actually delaying his departure. His ship was ready and waiting under sail at the Malamocco harbour entrance, but he could not leave since Ouwercx had not provided him with the necessary papers and passes.[124]

On 16 and 17 February, two other shipmasters added their protestations to Evertsen's, stating that the consul was deliberately hindering those who sought the assistance of others in settling the freightage and providing cargoes. Piccini recorded on behalf of shipmaster Mijnardo Harichsen Schur of the *Barca Piscatore* that he was "finally tired of running after you, Signor Egidio Ouwercx, who are obliged by the States General to help us, Netherlandish shipmasters, with obtaining the necessary paperwork for our departure".[125] Ouwercx for his part countered these accusations with a number of writs registered in the following days. Of course, he denied all the charges; he also declared that these complaints had not been voiced by the shipmasters, but by someone else, a "lover of protests and machination", who had registered the protestations in the name of the shipmasters "out of unfounded hate and contempt against me personally". To

[122] NA The Hague, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.05, Bijlagen, no.8332, "Rapport van den Heer van Sommelsdijck over sijne legatie nae Venetien": "Binnen Venetien is verscheyden maelen de Nederlandsche Natie gesamentlijcken en corps ende daer nae door Gedeputeerde voor my gecompareert; hebben hun beclaechen over Gillis Ouwercx". See also the journal by Van Aerssen's secretary, Constantijn Huygens, who noted that representatives of the Netherlandish nation visited the ambassador on 27 June 1620 to ask him for mediation in certain disputes, Huygens, *Journaal*, 148. For Van Aerssen's mission, see Geyl, *Christofforo Suriano*, 290-296.
[123] Ouwercx combined his consulate and shipbroker services with mercantile activities. He had a firm with Gasparo Wesel, ASV, NA, b.10765, 1 August 1620, c.179r-179v. The firm dissolved in 1620 over a dispute between the two business partners, see ASV, NA, b.10765, c.260r; c.331v; c.337v.
[124] ASV, NA, b.10765, c.25v-26v.
[125] ASV, NA, b.10765, c.27v-28r and 28r-28v.

corroborate his claim that someone was trying to discredit him, the consul had the official of the *Giudici del Forestier* testify that the trader Nicolò Perez - not the shipmasters - had delivered the original protestations. In addition, Ouwercx brought along Schur to the office of Piccini at Rialto to withdraw the accusations made in his name and give evidence under oath that he had no complaints about the consul whatsoever.[126] Van Aerssen decided not to interfere in the disputes between the traders and the consul and to leave the matter to his successor Berck.[127] Ouwercx therefore continued to combine his consular activities with his commercial affairs and brokerage services, occasionally colliding with the resident traders.[128] Relations between Ouwercx' immediate successors and the Netherlandish nation were not as problematic, probably because the consular duties were more clearly described, or maybe the consuls Josua van Sonnevelt (1633-1648) and Giacomo Stricher (1648-1687) were less inclined to extend their jurisdiction to include the nation's business.[129]

Emphasizing, as Cowan has done, that the Netherlanders were controlled by the urban authorities does not do justice to the way these immigrant traders could influence their own position.[130] Using well-aimed collective actions, the Netherlandish merchants found ways to mitigate the inequalities imposed by the Venetian government on immigrant traders and to obtain significant communal trading privileges. That individual and collective strategies aimed at gaining a better foothold in Venetian society, could coexist, is illustrated by the case of the merchant Gasparo Charles and his son Balthasar, who - even though Gasparo was granted citizenship in 1604 - continued to participate in the petitions submitted to the Venetian authorities by the Netherlandish nation, lobbying for trade privileges.[131] The merchants also succeeded in delaying the official recognition by the Venetian state of the first Netherlands consul until his duties were more clearly defined and curtailed by the States General.

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[126] ASV, NA, b.10765, c.27r-27v, 28v-30r.
[127] NA The Hague, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.05, Bijlagen, no.8332, "Rapport van den Heer van Sommelsdijck over sijne legatie nae Venetien".
[128] Political news concerning Venice and the other Italian states also occupies a large part in Ouwercx' letters to the States General see Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 68. He must have set up a network of informants immediately upon his arrival in Venice in 1615.
[129] For the Dutch consuls in Venice, Schutte (ed.), *Repertorium*, 462; Heeringa (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis 1590-1660*, 83-89.
[130] Cf. Cowan, "Foreigners and the city", 53.
[131] Gasparo Charles even signed his name under the radical proposal brought forward by Santonini, ASV, SM, f.187, the document is not dated. For Balthasar Charles, Gasparo's son, see Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, nos.2156; 2300.

Moreover, the *nazione* formed an important medium for sociability, with collective dinners further strengthening feelings of mutual interdependence, while providing various forms of communal assistance as well, ranging from intercession with the Venetian authorities to the handing out of advice or sums of money. The collective, therefore, supplied the individual immigrant merchant with a safety net and an alternative to support from family and friends in the North. Close business connections and social ties within the community, however, did not imply that the Netherlanders formed a segregated enclave in early modern Venice. The final chapter of this study examines the ways in which the Netherlanders found their place in the Venetian urban fabric.

Chapter 6. At home in early modern Venice

Finding a home

After having spent several years as a merchant in Venice, Giacomo Nichetti (Jacques Nicquet) had returned to the Low Countries by 1603. Upon his death in Amsterdam in 1642 an inventory of his belongings was drawn up, showing that he owned a substantial collection of paintings, including two "conterfeytsels", or likenesses, "representing one Peres and his wife".[1] That these were portraits of Nicolò and Sybilla Perez seems more than likely: while in Venice, Nichetti had frequently worked with Nicolò Perez, like himself a merchant originally from Antwerp. They had remained in contact with one another upon Nichetti's return to the north, each regularly giving the other power of attorney to settle commercial affairs in either Venice or Amsterdam.[2]

That a relationship, going beyond regular business dealings, existed between these two men is further illustrated by Nichetti's 1618 dedication to Perez of a volume of poems, written by Perez' brother-in-law.[3] In fact, when at the death of Nicolò Perez in 1622 his belongings were inventoried, portraits of Giacomo Nichetti and his wife Clara de Haze hung prominently in the entrance hall of his Venetian home.[4] The exchange of portraits exemplified the mutual bonds between Perez and Nichetti, based on a shared Antwerp background, their common experience as immigrants in Venice, and their frequent business contacts. The previous chapters have shown that such close economic

[1] The inventory is included in Logan, *The 'cabinet'*, 249: "Item twee conterfeytsels representeerende eenen Peres ende zijne huysvrouw met ebbenhoute lijsten". For Nichetti's and his father's (Jan Nicquet) collection of paintings, Logan, *The 'cabinet'*, 15-18; Meijer, *Een speurtocht*.
[2] For example, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.937: Nichetti gives power of attorney to Perez, 11 August 1599, and Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.1823: Perez is given power of attorney by Giacomo Nichetti and Gerard Reijnst in Amsterdam, 12 March 1606, while on 19 May 1617 (no.3538) they gave one another power of attorney.
[3] The dedication reads: "Al molto ill.re sig.r mio il sig.r Nicolo Perez alias Pieters gentilhuomo flamingo" in Conestaggio, *Rime*. Gerolamo Conestaggio (1530-1616/18) was a Genovese nobleman who had spent considerable time in Antwerp during the 1550s, where he worked as a merchant and married one of Perez' sisters. During that time he became part of the Accademia dei Confusi, a circle of Genovese traders engaged in literary activities. In the *Rime*, published in Amsterdam in 1618, Conestaggio celebrates the city of Antwerp and dedicates a laudatory poem to commerce. The inventory of Nichetti's belongings shows that he himself owned a copy of the *Rime*, Logan, *The 'cabinet'*, 261. Conestaggio wrote historical works as well, among others an account of the Revolt of the Netherlands, *Historia delle guerre della Germania Inferiore*, first published in Venice in 1614.
[4] ASV, GP, Inventari, b.348, no.24, 31 October 1622.

and social ties among the Netherlandish merchants in Venice were widespread and formed the foundation for the successful collective actions of the *nazione*. Yet did these strong internal relations cause the traders to live in isolation, forming a Netherlandish enclave in the city of Venice?[5] This chapter explores the place the Netherlandish immigrant traders held in Venetian society, starting with its most visible expression, their homes. Were there any government regulations regarding the merchants' houses? Did they live in close vicinity to one another or scattered over the city? The second paragraph goes on to consider their lifestyle, while the next paragraph examines the relationships between the Netherlanders and native Venetians, again questioning Cowan's idea of the traders as a segregated group of outsiders. The final chapter examines how two Netherlandish families succeeded in gaining entry into the patriciate and how the Venetian elite responded to their inclusion.

In every city, early modern or otherwise, the location of a home expresses the socio-economic status of its inhabitants. A large house on a fashionable street or a small dwelling in an out-of-the-way alley each reflect the financial resources and social position of the occupants, and in early modern Venice the situation was no different. The high population density of the city meant that patricians often lived at close quarters with shopkeepers, artisans, day labourers, and the poor. Each parish, therefore, contained a cross section of inhabitants; yet certain quarters did have a distinct character and some were decidedly more attractive than others. The district between San Marco and Rialto was one of the prime residential areas of the city, while a palace lining the Canal Grande was, of course, the most prestigious domicile one could have in Venice. Moving further away from the Canal Grande, towards the edges of the city, the neighbourhoods acquired a distinctly less fashionable character. The district of Cannaregio, for example, contained the city's slaughterhouse, soap factories, and the hub of the wood trade. Many of those working in such industries lived here as well, in poor-quality housing. The average rents in the Cannaregio parish of San Geremia, for example, were among the lowest in the entire city.[6] Similarly, in the Castello district, which was home to workers of the Arsenal,

[5] Cf. Cowan, "Foreigners and the city", 53.
[6] Concina, *Venezia nell' età moderna*, 85.

many seamen, and immigrants from Venice's dominions in the eastern Mediterranean, seventy to eighty percent of all available housing was of the cheapest kind.[7]

Where immigrants settled within the host city depended on a variety of factors.[8] A collective building could attract a concentration of immigrants, but proximity to the workplace and the availability of affordable housing were important factors as well. Immigrants, however, were not always free to choose the location of their homes, but had to comply with strict government regulations. The clearest example in Venice was the creation of the Jewish ghetto in the Cannaregio district. Only at the start of the sixteenth century did Jews get the right to settle in the city, and in 1516, Venice established the *Ghetto Nuovo* (despite its name the *Ghetto Vecchio* was created later).[9] This policy of residential segregation was devised to regulate and control the presence of non-Christian immigrants in the city.

Other immigrants who were considered less alien did not have to comply with such restrictions and consequently had a very different residential pattern. The Greeks were the largest community of foreigners in Venice.[10] They were seen as Venetian subjects since most came from the Greek islands in the Venetian dominion or from former Venetian territories now conquered by the Ottoman Empire. The Venetian government allowed them to organize a confraternity and to build their own orthodox church in the parish of San Giorgio in Castello, close to the Arsenal where many Greeks worked.[11] A cluster of other buildings for collective use sprang up in the environs of their church - including a library, a hospital, and a monastery - and these communal institutions combined with the close vicinity to their main workplace attracted many Greeks to the parish, which subsequently became known as San Giorgio dei Greci.[12]

For certain groups of foreign merchants government regulations pertaining to their settlement existed as well. As has been discussed in Chapter 1, the Venetian desire

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[7] Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice*, 146; Concina, *Venezia nell' età moderna*, 73-103. On the workers of the Arsenal, Davis, *Shipbuilders*.
[8] For example, see Chauvard, "Scale di osservazione" for early modern Venice and Lesger, "Migranten" for a study of the residential pattern of immigrants in eighteenth-century Amsterdam.
[9] The Senate decree obliging the Jews to live in the ghetto area is included in Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 338-339.
[10] Fedalto, "Stranieri a Venezia", 449.
[11] Fedalto, "Stranieri a Venezia", 505-506.
[12] Porfyriou, "La presenza greca", 32ff; Chauvard, "Scale di osservazione", 92-94.

to regulate international commerce had led to the foundation of the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, where all German merchants had to conduct their trade.[13] German merchants could rent rooms on the three floors of the *Fondaco* and use the communal kitchen, dining rooms, and storage vaults in the building.[14] A similar institution was founded in 1621, the *Fondaco dei Turchi* for merchants from the Ottoman Empire. There was a difference, however. Although this exchange house operated along the same commercial lines as the one for the Germans, its house rules emphasized a much stricter need for privacy, stating for example that a high wall was to block the view of the *Fondaco*'s courtyard "so that the Turks cannot be seen by their neighbours". A guardian had to lock the doors of the building at dusk and open them again at sunrise, as well as make sure that no "women or beardless persons who may be Christians" entered the premises.[15] The accommodation of Muslim traders in a Christian environment and the often-strained political relations between the Venetian and Ottoman states caused the Venetians to enforce stricter rules and curfews, reminiscent of the statutes of the ghetto.[16]

When the Venetians dominated the main trade routes, they could require the Germans to live and trade in the Fondaco. The settlement of Ottoman merchants and Jews was restricted for political and religious reasons. No restrictions applied to the Netherlanders who formed a relatively small group but with a very strong economic position at a time when Venetian trade was dwindling, and who were not considered a potentially disruptive presence. Consequently they had more room to manoeuvre and were free in their choice of residence. With no collective buildings, the Netherlandish traders did not settle in one particular area, but lived scattered over different neighbourhoods. For example, at the time of his death, Nicolò Perez lived in Santi Apostoli, while during his years in Venice Giacomo Nichetti rented a house in the parish of San Felice.[17] Information from leases, probate inventories, and testaments indicates that the Netherlandish merchants lived in the more centrally located parishes, with an

[13] Simonsfeld, *Der Fondaco*; Kellenbenz, "Le déclin", 109-183.
[14] Chauvard, "Scale di osservazione", 89-90. The many German artisans and bakers were not compelled to live in the *Fondaco* or to work in a restricted area, Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice*, 163-164.
[15] The house rules for the new *Fondaco dei Turchi* are included in Chambers and Pullan (eds.), *Venice*, 350-352.
[16] Constable, *Housing the stranger*, 331; Concina, *Fondaci*, 239.
[17] For Perez, ASV, GP, Inventari, b.348, no.24, 31 October 1622. For Nichetti's house, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.614; 794.

understandable preference for a domicile within easy distance of Rialto. Those who, like Perez and Nichetti, lived in the Cannaregio district were just a short gondola ride away from the commercial marketplace, while the Netherlanders who preferred the prosperous parish of Santa Maria Formosa could stroll to Rialto.[18]

That living close to the most important mercantile area of the city was their first priority, becomes apparent from Melchior Noirot's choices of residence over more than three decades of living in Venice: he rented his Venetian first house, together with his compatriot Pietro Gabri, in 1598 in the parish of Santa Sofia just opposite Rialto, but by 1612 he had moved to the other bank of the Canal Grande, to the Calle del Pistor in the parish San Silvestro, adjacent to the Rialto area. At his death in 1629, Noirot was living in the parish of San Stae, again in close proximity to his daily business.[19] Other foreign merchant groups such as the Florentines and the Lucchesi show a similar preference for the parishes nearest Rialto.[20]

There was one restriction that did influence the Netherlanders in their choice of habitation. By law only Venetian citizens were allowed to own real estate in the city, hence all the Netherlandish merchants lived in rented homes. Yet renting was such a common phenomenon in Venice that it is doubtful they would have felt inconvenienced. In fact, tax records from 1582 show that roughly half the patrician families rented their houses. Whereas some rented because they could not afford to buy a home, others clearly preferred renting to keep their capital liquid for other investments.[21]

Not only did the Netherlanders live in centrally located parishes, they occupied the larger and more expensive residences in their neighbourhoods as well. Francesco Vrins' home in Santa Maria Formosa, for example, numbered fourteen different rooms, while Cornelio de Robiano's contained sixteen, with the average Venetian home consisting of just two or three rooms.[22] The rented home of Pietro Pellicorno was a fitting

[18] On Santa Maria Formosa, Howard, *The architectural history*, 140.
[19] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.803, 19 January 1598, lease for a house in the Ruga dai do Pozzi in Santa Sofia; Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2771, 31 January 1612, lease for a house in the Calle del Pistor in San Silvestro; ASV, NT, b.757, Noirot's testament of 24 May 1629.
[20] Martin and Romano (eds.), *Venice reconsidered*, 21.
[21] Brown, *Private lives*, 196-197.
[22] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 630-643 for the inventory of Vrins; ASV, NT, b.213 for De Robiano. On the average size of Venetian homes, see Palumbo Fossati, "L' interno della casa", 120.

residence for this formidable merchant. It was located in the Calle d'Oro, the small street flanking the fifteenth-century palace Ca'd'Oro along the Canal Grande. Pellicorno paid an annual rent of 280 ducats, more than any other Netherlandish merchant paid and well above what the majority of Venetians spent: only five percent of all Venetian rents in 1661 were over a hunderd ducats per year.[23] The location as well as the size of Pellicorno's home justified the high amount: he rented the entire house including a courtyard, two wells, and various storage facilities from the patrician Giovanni Battista Giustinian. In the same parish, but further away from the Canal Grande, was the home Noirot and Gabri rented in 1598, which at 74 ducats a year was the cheapest of all the Netherlandish houses.[24] On average the merchants from the Low Countries paid 135 ducats, at a time when Venetian annual rents averaged around 30 ducats.[25]

A wealthy lifestyle

Not just the size, but the interior of the Netherlandish homes in Venice also gave the impression of wealth. For example, Giovanni de Wale, born in Ghent, lived in the parish San'Aponal until his death in 1663, in a house consisting of fourteen rooms on two floors.[26] The walls of the most important chambers were covered with gilded leather (*cuori d'oro*) or decorated with tapestries from the Low Countries. Chests holding clothing and linen stood everywhere, and large numbers of mirrors, paintings, and portraits hung on De Wale's walls. The reception hall, for example, contained two images of the Virgin Mary and ten other pictures, while portraits of the deceased and four of his relatives adorned another chamber. In the bedroom of the Catholic De Wale hung five pieces of religious art, while the largest concentration of paintings - thirteen paintings, including seven family portraits - was found in the *liagò*, a roofed, projecting gallery, and

[23] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.1237 and 1726. For Venetian rents, Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione*, 219-220; Concina, *Venezia nell' età moderna*, 74: a humid ground floor room could be rented for 10-12 ducats, while an entire palace could cost anything between 200 and 1,000 ducats.
[24] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, no.803, 19 January 1598.
[25] For the leases of Netherlandish merchants, see Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, nos.135; 614; 804; 1550 and Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, nos.2070; 2710. The average Venetian rents can be found in Beltrami, *Storia della popolazione*, 219-220.
[26] ASV, NT, b.510, no.68.

probably the brightest room in the house.[27] Even the maidservants' quarters had two small pictures on the walls, yet all this was just a fraction of De Wale's picture collection: he had shipped most of his paintings - "258 tra grandi et picole" - to Amsterdam.[28] Other merchants also possessed large quantities of art. The house of Carlo Helman, for example, contained more than 130 paintings, including works by important Venetian artists such as Titian, Bassano, and Veronese.[29] Lucas van Uffelen, whose portrait was painted by Anthony van Dyck (Ill.6.1), and Giovanni Reijnst had important collections as well.[30] For some, like Helman and Reijnst, the paintings would have primarily represented social prestige, while others were as active in the trade in art works as they were in the buying and selling of more mundane goods.

Probably the best example of this latter category is Daniel Nijs, who was an important agent in the early modern art market and could count the English diplomat Sir Dudley Carleton, the Earl of Arundel, and even Charles I among his clients. He was instrumental in one of the largest art deals of the seventeenth century, the 1627 sale of the collection of the Duke of Mantua to the English king.[31] His own home in Santa Marina housed an impressive display of art as well. Vincenzo Scamozzi, describing the most important Venetian collections in 1615, included the one owned by Nijs, which at that time consisted of some 120 antique statues, 80 paintings, and a cabinet with miniatures

[27] *Liagò* could refer to a balcony or terrace, but in this case it clearly was a walled-up space, Howard, *Venice and the East*, 159-162.
[28] ASV, NT, b.510, no.68. The 258 paintings were at the house of his cousin, Simon Barckman, and were to be auctioned off after De Wale's death.
[29] In the *camera grande* hung "[u]n quadro con Giove in pioggia d'oro" and a Mary Magdalene by Titian. A small picture by Bassano adorned the *tinello*, while in another room hung a "Christo de man de Paulo Veronese fatto in Ecce Homo" and a painting of Apollo by Bassano could be found in the entrance hall, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, 799-811. Helman's son Ferdinando inherited the collection and at his death - he was killed in front of his home in San Severo in 1619 - he possessed some 200 paintings, including Titian's Mary Magdalene, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.3974.
[30] Logan, *The 'cabinet'*, specifically 33-36; Logan, "Kunstenaars, kooplieden". Carlo Ridolfi, who in all probability knew Giovanni Reijnst personally, dedicated the first part of his art-historical treatise *Le maraviglie dell' arte* to "gl'Ilustrissimi Signori Fratelli Reinst" and stressed the generosity of both Giovanni and his older brother Gerard to contemporary artists. He described how their galeries contained "opere molte di Raffaelo, di Gio Bellino, del Coreggio, del Parmegiano, di Titiano, del Tintoretto, di Paolo, e di qual si voglia insigne Pittore", see the dedication of the first part of Ridolfi, *Le Maraviglie*.
[31] For Nijs' involvement in the Mantua sale, see, for instance, Morselli, *Le collezioni Gonzaga*, 146-158; Howarth, "'Mantua Peeces'", 95-100, Howarth, *Lord Arundel*, 159-161. His contacts with Carleton and Arundel are described in Hill, *Works of art*, 24,77ff. For his contact with Venetian artistic circles, Van Gelder, "Acquiring artistic expertise".

and precious gems.[32] That same year, Giulio Cesare Gigli dedicated his poem *La pittura trionfante*, which celebrates Venetian art, to Nijs and included the merchant's portrait (Ill.6.2).[33]

Moving back to the De Wale residence, other material objects such as the bed and its furnishings, often the most expensive piece of furniture in the early modern home, clearly illustrated the merchant's prosperity, as well as the domestic hierarchy.[34] De Wale himself slept in a gilded canopied bed, with bed curtains of red damask. The gilded bed of De Wale's cousin Giovanni Beck, who worked in his uncle's service, was also enclosed by silk curtains, but whereas De Wale slept on four mattresses, Beck had to content himself with just two. Another occupant of the house was Filippo Pelichi, the *giovane di studio*, who worked together with Beck in De Wale's office, but who was not family and had to make do with a simple iron bed in a sparsely furnished room. The maidservants shared a room which contained two small, iron bedsteads.

The other probate inventories resemble De Wale's in opulence, listing large amounts of furniture, paintings, jewellery, and objects of precious metals.[35] The few indications of the actual monetary value of their household goods confirm that the Netherlanders spent lavishly on their homes.[36] The complete inventory of the home of Balthasar Charles and his son of the same name at the Ponte dell'Anzolo in Santa Maria

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[32] Scamozzi, *L' idea*, 306, Libro III, 306. Nijs rented the house at Santa Marina with his business partner Giovanni Falconieri in 1611, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, 324-325. Constantijn Huygens, who had come to Venice as secretary to the ambassador François van Aerssen, visited Nijs' house on 1 July 1620, and recorded in his travel diary that "seigneur Daniel Nijs" possessed an infinite number of paintings and statues, Huygens, *Journaal*, 150-151. Nijs' paintings and gems drew a mixed crowd of visitors, from German noblemen to high-ranking ecclesiastics: Van Aerssen's succesor, Johan Berck, paid a visit with Philipp Moritz, count of Hanau-Münzenberg on 15 May 1624, while Cardinal Alessandro Orsini (1592-1626) went to see Nijs' collection of paintings in December of that year, see Van Gelder, "Acquiring artistic expertise".

[33] Cesare, *La pittura trionfante.*

[34] Sarti, *Europe at home*, 119-120. Bedchambers often had a representational function as well, and a Venetian merchant's house always contained a gilded and lavishly decked-out bed, Palumbo Fossati, "L' interno della casa", 129.

[35] Van Gelder, "Thuis in vroegmodern Venetië", 165ff.

[36] Of course, one could rent a completely or partly furnished house. For example, in 1606, the Netherlandish merchant Pietro Panhusio moved into a *palazzo* at San Marciliano, which had a completely decorated entrance hall, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.1850. However, those Netherlandish traders that settled in Venice for a longer period of time invested in furniture and ornaments, hence the probate inventories and the care they often took in their last wills to divide their belongings, see e.g. ASV, NT, b.509, 10 March 1652: Andrea Ghelthof left his cousin Marino all the merchandise and furnishings in his home. Similarly, Marco Moens who had spent most of his seventy-one years in Venice, bequeathed all his furniture and valuable furnishings to his heirs, ASV, NT, b.935, 10 December 1661.

Formosa was estimated at 1,723 ducats, the belongings of Carlo Helman were appraised at almost 2,500 ducats, while the inventory of Tomaso van Castre in 1620 was valued at 2,557 ducats, which places all three residences in the category of most affluently furnished homes in Venice.[37] In contrast, no probate inventories have been left describing the contents of the homes of English merchants, indicating that this group resided for shorter periods of time in Venice and probably had less money to spend.[38]

The inventoried houses bear traces of their inhabitants' Netherlandish origins: Abraham Spilleurs, who died in 1658, owned quite a number of objects from his homeland, such as a drawing of the city of Flushing, a Bible and numerous mercantile letters "in fiamengo", an ebony ruler to measure wine in the Netherlandish manner, and even a chamber pot "alla fiamminga".[39] Most other traders, however, possessed a much smaller number of household goods that can be identified as Netherlandish, though they often did own pictures of Netherlandish towns, like Carlo Gabri's painting of Ostend, or large quantities of fabrics produced in the Low Countries, merchandise they often traded in.[40] Yet because the city of Venice had been at the centre of international commerce for centuries, foreign luxury goods such as Netherlandish paintings and northern European fabrics were also quite common in the homes of wealthy Venetians.[41]

Judging from the abundance of their belongings and their spacious houses, the Netherlandish merchants conformed quite easily to the lifestyle of the Venetian elite. They used their homes to express their status as prosperous international traders in much the same way as the Venetian upper class represented their social and political power. While the day-to-day activities took place in other areas of the house, which could also contain much of the material wealth of the family, the *portego* or entrance hall was the first room any visitor would enter and the domestic space most used by Venetian

[37] Balthasar Charles senior and junior had died within six months of each other in 1603. The inventory was made at the request of Charles' other son, Gasparo, see Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I no.1795; for the Helman inventory, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.3907; for Tomaso van Castre's inventory, ASV, NA, b.10765, 3 November 1620. In 1661 the most valuable Venetian inventories had an estimated worth between 1,200 and 7,500 ducats, Zanetta, "L' inventario", 207.
[38] Fusaro, "The English mercantile community", 39.
[39] ASV, GP, Inventari, b.366, no.5.
[40] For Gabri's inventory, ASV, NA, b.11973, c.607. Helman owned a clock "che suona alla fiamenga", Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, 804.
[41] For the Venetian homes, see Palumbo Fossati, "L' interno della casa", 143, and for the Venetian patricians' houses, Brown, "Behind the walls" and Chapter 3 in Brown, *Private lives*.

patricians to represent themselves in a formal way through a display of family portraits, coats of arms, and weaponry. This room was often used to host large dinner parties and other forms of entertainment and had to contain enough tables and chairs to accommodate many guests.[42]

Just as in Venetian patrician residences, visitors entering the Netherlandish homes were treated to a lavish display of material objects. An array of weapons was a typical symbol of a noble identity, with harnesses, shields, and helmets reflecting the patrician family's honour; yet the *portego* of the immigrant merchant Carlo Helman was also lined with eight shields, two harquebuses, and twelve spears. De Robiano's front hall contained three harquebuses, two swords, and one spear as well, showing that both these traders were confident enough to use aristocratic symbols to express their status in Venetian society.[43] The other traders might not exhibit any weaponry in their *porteghi*, but their residences did resemble those of the Venetian elite in other aspects. Their reception halls, in fact, were equally well furnished for entertainment. For example, Francesco Vrins' *portego* held two tables, nineteen chairs, and twenty stools, while Carlo Helman could receive his guests at a large table, surrounded by sixteen chairs, ten of which were *da donna*.[44] Undoubtedly the *portego* was where Martin Hureau threw his dinner parties for friends and colleagues at the start of every New Year, and where, one August evening, the merchant Van der Putten entertained Ambassador Berck and other Netherlandish traders with a lively banquet.[45] The Netherlandish merchants, then, not only had the financial means to receive guests, but also the appropriate surroundings to maintain *casa*

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[42] In Patricia Fortini Brown's words, the *portego* was the spine of a Venetian house. It functioned as a corridor, running from front to back of the house, onto which the other rooms on the same floor opened up. Its most important use was as a space for entertainment and display. Much of the following is inspired by Brown's description of the representational use of the *portego* by the Venetian nobility in Brown, *Private lives*, 63-75, as well as in Brown, "Behind the walls".

[43] Such display seems not to have formed part of non-noble Venetian interiors, Brown, *Private lives*, 32, nor was it common in the homes of Netherlandish merchants, except for those who expressed their membership in the *schutterijen*, the civic militia. I wish to thank Dr. Thera Wijsenbeek for this information on interiors in the Dutch Republic. Neither the Helman or De Robiano families could boast a noble descent, nor was the reception hall the place where Netherlandish traders in Venice stored weapons for daily use, to ward off the dangers connected with an early modern merchant's work. These were kept in more private rooms: for example, Filippo Pelichi had a pair of pistols in his room, while his employer De Wale kept a collection of pistols, an *arcobuso*, and two swords in his bedchamber, ASV, NT, b.510, no.68.

[44] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 630-643 for Vrins; Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, 799-811 for Helman.

[45] RUG, Handschriftenbibliotheek nr.1473, "Cort verhael", c.37r-38r; 67v; 44v.

aperta, a well-equipped house suited to a refined and urbane lifestyle.[46] This was one of the factors which the *Cinque Savi* took into consideration when they had to decide whether Carlo Helman's sons were worthy of the *cittadinaza per privilegio*.[47]

The decoration of their *porteghi* indicated not only an affluent lifestyle; this part of the house was also employed to express the identity of the inhabitants. The walls of the Netherlandish reception halls were often decorated with a *mappamondo* (map of the world). By the seventeenth century the *mappamondi* in Venetian *porteghi* had become common symbols of good taste, nonetheless the maps in the reception halls at Vrins' and De Robiano's clearly referred to the character of their business activities, while the maps, atlases, and globes in their *studio* obviously served a more practical use.[48] As in the *porteghi* of the Venetian nobility, paintings graced the walls of the Netherlandish reception halls. Francesco Vrins, for example, displayed nine family portraits. Visitors could admire two likenesses of Vrins himself, one of his daughter Catarina, and six of other relatives as well as six landscapes, two kitchen scenes, a Judgement of Paris, and one sculpted figure of the Flagellation.[49]

Carlo Helman displayed seven paintings in his *portego*, but only one was a portrait, representing the master of the house himself, dressed in Oriental attire. Hanging on either side of his portrait were pictures of the Escorial and of Constantinople. As a member of a family firm with branches in Antwerp, Paris, Vienna, and Seville, Helman had worked for some years in Constantinople, and he had maintained business contacts with the Ottoman Empire and Persia after moving to Venice.[50] Helman's prominently placed portrait as well as his exotic dress invited anyone entering his house at Santa Maria Formosa to conclude that this was the home of a successful, international merchant, an impression that was consciously reinforced in other rooms. The inventory shows that day-to-day business was done in one sparsely decorated study, probably the territory of Helman's apprentices, while his own study contained an elaborate collection of exotica and Ottoman weapons. In Venice, Ottoman objects were not a rarity, but for

[46] See for the concept of *casa aperta* Brown, "Behind the walls", 296-297.
[47] See above, Chapter 5, 123.
[48] *Mappamondi* were rare in sixteenth-century Venice, but by the seventeenth century they had become very popular as a sign of wealth and good taste, Brown, "Behind the walls", 310.
[49] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 633.
[50] Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, 799-811.

Helman these objects undoubtedly had a representational function, proclaiming his success in Levantine trade to (prospective) business partners.

Perez' *portego* introduced the house and its inhabitants in a different way, with an abundance of portraits illustrating ancestral ties and other relationships. Assuming that the sequence in which the notary registered the paintings reflected their actual position on the *portego* walls, upon entering the hall visitors were first confronted with a large painting of Adam and Eve, immediately followed by a portrait of Perez himself and his wife. Then came a row of pictures of family members, including a painting of Perez' sister Agnese, a cousin Beatrice, his first wife, and a deceased son.[51] Four paintings of Venetian patricians, among them Giovanni Bembo, who was doge between 1616 and 1617, followed, while the last paintings in the entrance hall were the previously mentioned portraits of Giacomo Nichetti and his wife. With its portraits of family, friends, and prominent Venetians, the *portego* in the house of Nicolò Perez clearly served as a kind of business card, emphasizing his status as a well-connected merchant.

Domestic spaces such as the *portego* could give an impression of the Netherlanders' social prestige, but the traders expressed their affluence outside their Venetian homes as well. An important status symbol in Venice was a fully decked-out gondola, which served not only as a means of transport, but set the wealthy in Venetian society apart from those who had to use the *traghetti*, the public ferries, to cross the Canal Grande, or those who went on foot.[52] All the inventoried Netherlandish households contained a gondola and its furnishings, and the merchants often employed one or more gondoliers. Each time the merchants set out to be rowed to Rialto, they showed that they could match the Venetian elite in wealth.[53] They conformed to the Venetian habit of *villeggiatura* - to retire to one's country villa - and a number of Netherlanders owned a summer residence on the mainland or on the islands in the lagoon.[54] Here non-Venetians

[51] ASV, GP, b.348, no.24.
[52] See for the gondola as a Venetian status symbol Romano, "The gondola".
[53] For instance, Vrins owned a "gondola con tutti li suoi fornimenti, pezze et zenie", Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 632, and the inventory of Carlo Helman describes a used gondola with its "felze et tutti li altri suoi fornimenti", Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, 809. The merchants often left money to their gondoliers, for example, ASV, NT, b.756, Giovanni van Mere, who bequeathed fifty ducats to his *popiero*.
[54] Venetian nobles repaired to the country when politics were suspended during the summer season (between 21 June until the end of July) and the autumn season (between 4 October until mid November), Burke, *Venice and Amsterdam*, 69.

could buy property without any restrictions. Francesco Vrins and Cornelio De Robiano could retire to their houses on Murano, while the area along the Brenta river was popular with others, such as Pietro Pellicorno, who rented a villa in the village of Strà. Pietro del Prato. Cornelio Hoons, and Nicolò Perez also possessed country homes in this region.[55] These retreats could be easily reached from Venice by boat and offered a welcome relief from the summer heat which brought many of the city's activities to a halt. Ambassador Berck took advantage of the suspension of political activities and spent the entire summer of 1624 with his family as guests of the widow Perez at her conveniently located and well-furnished villa.[56]

The homes of the Netherlandish merchants in Venice do not give the impression of a segregated group of immigrants, but instead indicate that they tried to blend in with their wealthy Venetian neighbours. Maintaining an air, or façade, of prosperity was of great importance to the traders.[57] A merchant depended on his reputation and trustworthiness at a time when many business deals entailed longstanding debts and a constant need for credit. Showing that one was able to maintain a luxurious lifestyle contributed to keeping up a good reputation and maintaining creditworthiness.[58] The Netherlanders' sumptuously decorated houses and *porteghi*, their gondolas and country homes all communicated their trustworthiness as affluent business partners; hence the concern of Guglielmo van der Voort, who wrote to family members in Antwerp in 1644 at a time when Venetian trade was in a slump: "These are bad times. We live soberly, no

[55] For Vrins, see ASV, NT, b.213, no.36; Perez in ASV, GP, b.348, no.24; Del Prato in Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.1922; Pellicorno rented a villa at Strà for 135 ducats in 1607, which after his death was taken over by the patrician Almerigo Balbi, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.1988; Carlo Helman owned a significant amount of property in the Terraferma, Ibidem, no.3907.

[56] RUG, Handschriftenbibliotheek nr.1473, "Cort verhael", c.41v: while in Venice, Berck also visited the country residence of Van der Putten and Noirot and Van Uffelen's farmhouse. Nijs possessed a home on Murano and had a *palazzo* built on the island Cavallino. In 1625 he hired two 'duinmeiers' (stewards) from Holland, who were to plant the dunes on the island and raise rabbits, see GAA, NotArch, no.391, fol.293-294.

[57] See Burke, "Conspicious consumption", who applies sociological and anthropological theories to investigate conspicuous consumption in seventeenth-century Italy.

[58] Kooijmans, "Risk and reputation", especially 33.

gondola, no villa, no banquets". Seven years later his misgivings were proven correct when he had to declare bankruptcy.[59]

Venetian relations

During their stay in Venice, which often lasted many years or even a lifetime, the Netherlandish merchants were frequently in close contact with Venetians, whether business contacts, neighbours, or household servants. For some, these connections went much further, evolving into long-term sexual and sentimental relationships, and in a few cases matrimony. Information from the archives of the *Avogaria di Comun* gives an idea of one intimate relationship between a Netherlandish trader and a Venetian girl. In 1645, Laura Armana was involved in an elaborate court case brought against her by her husband Giacomo Savioni, who stated that she was "the most perfidious and wicked person that nature has ever produced".[60] Giacomo accused her of having tried to steal his money, and in turn Laura filed grievances against him, claiming that he had tried to poison her. Eventually both spouses petitioned for a separation, and to strengthen his case Savioni investigated his wife's past, digging up an unexpected number of previous marriages, annulments, and affairs.

The first time Laura sought an annulment had been thirty-three years earlier; at that time she stated that she had been very young, only fourteen, when a "Amblardo Vancastri fiamengo" had deflowered her under promise of marriage.[61] Following this liaison her mother had forced her into marriage with another man, a union she sought to dissolve in 1612. Laura's former housemaid testified in court that this Vancastri frequently visited Laura's house in San Marcuola and that he would spend the night there as well. She had also heard him swear on the image of Mary that he would take Laura as

[59] As cited by Baetens, "Een Antwerps handelshuis", 57: "Het zijn slechte tijden. We leven sober, geen gondel, geen lustplaats, geen banketten". See for the Van der Voort bankruptcy and its fall-out in Venice ASV, GF, Dimande, b.45, no.7.
[60] As cited by Ferraro, *Marriage wars*, 155, who analyses the Savioni-Armana case in detail in the final chapter of her book.
[61] ASV, AC, Misto, b.3015/7, c.9v: "fù deflorata dal q. Domino Amblardo Vancastri fiamengo col quale perserverò per certo tempo soto pretesto et con sperenza che da lui fosse sposata, come anco gli ne haveva data intentioni se ben poi non ci fù atteso".

his wife, but that they would have to wait until he had convinced his brothers.[62] Laura's brother confirmed this, stating that Amblardo had used to call him his brother-in-law, but that opposition of the Vancastri family had prevented the marriage until the unexpected death of Amblardo had brought the relationship to an end.

Had Vancastri indeed promised marriage to Laura? Or was she trying to manipulate the court by portraying herself as a youthful victim, first of an interrupted love affair, and then of a forced marriage with another man?[63] Whatever the exact nature of the relationship between Laura and Vancastri relationship may have been, quite a large number of Venetian men frequented the girl's house at the time that, in the words of one of them, "said *Madonna* Laura was kept by *Signor* Vancastrio".[64] Laura's lover can be identified as the Netherlandish merchant Amblardo van Castre, originally from Malines. He lived with his two brothers Giacomo and Tomaso, who allegedly prevented him from marrying Laura, in the parish of San Canciano, not far from Laura's house in the parish of San Marcuola.[65]

Other Netherlandish merchants had relationships outside the legal, conjugal bond as well, frequently living with their Venetian mistresses. Filippo de Boch left the largest part of his inheritance to his mother in Hamburg, but 800 ducats and what probably was one of his most valuable possessions, his gilded and canopied bed with all its furnishings and three mattresses went to Madonna Giacomina "qui di casa".[66] The responsibility the merchants felt towards their Venetian lovers often went further than mere financial provisions, and speak of long-term and intense relationships. Adriano Heijermans, for

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[62] Laura Armana's housemaid stated that "tante volte ho sentito il medesimo signor Amblardo la in casa à dir ch' egli haveva havuta la virginità di detta madonna Laura, et che la era sua moglie", ASV, AC, Misto, b.3015/7, c.16r. For the pre-Tridentine church the promise of marriage would have been enough to formalize the relationship, but by the end of the sixteenth century the legal requirements of marriage had been firmly established by the Council of Trent, Ruggiero, *Binding passions*, 60-61. Also Hacke, *Women, sex and marriage*; Ferraro, *Marriage wars*, for the most recent discussion of marriage practices in post-Tridentine Venice.

[63] Her fourth husband Savioni declared that she was "an expert at deceiving ecclesiastical justice, and of betraying and persecuting husbands", as cited in Ferraro, *Marriage wars*, 157.

[64] As the Venetian nobleman Girolamo Priuli, son of Francesco, stated, who himself "praticava in casa di essa signora Laura", ASV, AC, Misto, b.3015/7, c.36v-37r.

[65] ASV, NA, b.10765, c.283r, 29 October 1620, when the lease of the house by the Van Castres in 1608 was registered in a notarial deed. The Van Castre firm traded among other things in mirrors, ASV, NA, b. 10766, c.26r-26v, 4 January 1621.

[66] ASV, NT, b.758, 20 March 1642. On concubinage in Venice, see Cowan, "Mogli non ufficiali" and Ambrosini, "Toward a social history of women", 429-430, who notes an increase in secret and clandestine marriages between Venetian patricians and concubines after Trent.

example, had until his death at the age of thirty-one been living with Lucia Bosata, his friend (*amica*) who had been taking care of him for many years. Lucia was the one who, after Adriano had succumbed to a malignant fever, had him buried and decided upon the number of commemorative masses to be said for his soul. On his deathbed, wishing to die in the grace of God, Heijermans had wanted to take care of his mistress, both materially and spiritually. He left her all the furniture of his house plus the sum of 600 ducats. Adriano stipulated that the money was a token of his gratitude for Lucia's affectionate assistance and that he hoped she would use it to extract herself from sin and save her soul.[67] The same concern for the well-being of his lover can be found in the testament of Giovanni Barckmans, who lived with his great-uncle Giovanni de Wale at San Aponal in Venice. He left an annual dividend of a hundred ducats for the duration of ten years to his *donna*, Arcangela Fregoza.[68]

Most traders seem to have provided quite well for any children resulting from these affairs, leaving them substantial sums of money and making arrangements for their education. Rodolfo Oloffs took great care not to reveal the identity of the "donna mondana" he was frequenting when he made his testament in 1647, explaining that his executors Marco Moens and Giovanni Battista Nicolai knew well who she was. In addition to guarding his mistress' identity, Oloffs stipulated that if any children, male or female, should be born from their union, the first-born would inherit the considerable sum of 15,000 ducats, while their second child would receive 10,000 ducats.[69] Giovanni Antonio, who according to his father Giovanni van Mere was exactly five years and eight months old in September 1627, was being brought up at the home of a family member of his unnamed mother.[70] The child, who bore his father's last name, was to inherit 630 ducats from a business enterprise Van Mere had in Messina, and another 1,500 ducats from the merchant's estate, which were to be used for his education under supervision of

[67] ASV, NT, b.166, 5 October 1689. Andrea Ghelthof seems to have maintained a relationship with a Venetian woman in his household as well: he left a certain Bettina Rondanina some money and let her keep the golden ring he had given her, ASV, NT, b.509, 10 March 1652.
[68] ASV, NT, b.806, 13 August 1660.
[69] ASV, NT, b.807, 5 November 1647, "particolar legato ducati quindeci mille di valuta di banco per una volta tanto; e quando o di prossimo ò in altro venturo tempo me ne nassessero con la donna stessa più di uno intendo ch' habbino per (...) particolar legato come sopra ducati diecimille per uno tanto mascoli che femine fosero".
[70] ASV, NT, b.756, 8 September 1627.

trader Luca van Uffelen, Van Mere's business partner in Venice. Giovanni Antonio did indeed follow in his father's footsteps and can be found in Venice shipping silk from Messina to Amsterdam some twenty-five years later.[71] The bastard sons of Abraham Heijermans and Pasqueta Ringata, wife of Iseppo Calliago, were also well provided for: Pasqueta was to inherit an annual legacy of a hundred ducats, while Giovanni Battista and Giovanni Giacomo each inherited the enormous sum of 30,000 ducats.[72]

Gasparo della Faille and Balthasar Snoeck shared not only a business firm and a house, but also the attentions of one *Madonna* Anzola. When Gasparo died in November 1629, he left most of his inheritance to his mother in Antwerp, but 1,000 ducats went to his and Anzola's daughter, Marieta, whom his companion Snoeck was to raise at his expense and provide with a dowry when she was of a marriageable age.[73] A year later Snoeck made his testament when the plague swept through Venice, instructing that Anzola Bolpe was to receive 1,200 ducats and a pearl necklace. Their daughter Fabiana was to inherit the same sum of money as well as all the clothes and linen in the house, while Della Faille's Marieta would be given 500 ducats.[74]

Yet the position of the merchants' illegitimate children was not always a favourable one. In Adolfo van Axel's household, his natural daughter Margarita lived under the same roof as his wife and legitimate children. Van Axel made arrangements so that in the event of his death she would lack neither food nor clothes. Should Margarita be maltreated by his other children and forced to leave the house, his executors would provide her with 1,000 ducats for her maintenance.[75] These detailed provisions clearly reveal the precarious position Margarita held as a bastard child in the Van Axel family.

None of the traders except for Carlo Helman legitimized their natural children. His long-term relation with Lugretia Manetti started when Helman moved to Venice in 1594-1595 and lasted until his death in 1605. They lived together and had three children who were naturalized just before Helman undertook the journey to Seville which was to

[71] ASV, GF, b.45, no.337, 28 November 1651.
[72] ASV, NT, b.806, 9 March 1645.
[73] ASV, NT, b.757, 14 November 1629.
[74] ASV, NT, b.806, 24 October 1630. Snoeck died in March 1631. See for Snoeck and Della Faille's business relation ASV, NA, b.10782, c.692r-692v, 30 August 1630.
[75] ASV, NT, b.757, 3 January 1636 (m.v.).

be his last.[76] Lugretia must have been much more than a mistress or a concubine, and it even seems that they might have attempted a secret marriage which Helman for unknown reasons suspended. Maybe they had contemplated a clandestine match because of parental objections, probably from Lugretia's family since Helman had no next of kin in Venice?[77] In any case their union was never officially consecrated by marriage, but in his will Helman asked his executors to take care of Lugretia, stressing that she had always behaved honourably and properly, and that she was to receive 2,000 ducats in cash upon his death as well as a handsome annual allowance of 300 ducats for the rest of her life. Helman also left her all the furnishings, furniture, clothes, jewellery, and all the money he had given her during their time together.[78]

In general the merchants had a preference for endogamic matches that strengthened economic alliances. Illicit relations between Netherlandish merchants and Venetian women were therefore much more frequent than actual marriages. Nevertheless, a few traders did seek a marital bond with Venetian families, for themselves or for their offspring. If they had contracted marriage with a native Venetian, the merchants often stressed this point in their petitions to the Venetian authorities as a demonstration of their voluntary participation in Venetian society. In the case of Giorgio Heldewier, the *Cinque Savi* did take into account his marriage to a Venetian woman and the resulting ten children when they evaluated Heldewier's request for citizenship in May 1600.[79] Of course, economic arguments usually weighed heaviest and Adolfo van Axel was certainly stretching it when he applied for citizenship in 1628 and claimed that he had taken a Venetian citizen as wife: Catarina van Axel was, in fact, the daughter of Netherlandish

[76] See the provisions in Helman's testament, Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 658-659.
[77] Their relationship was certainly somewhat shrouded in secrecy, because again for reasons he did not care to specify Helman used to call Lugretia by the name of Laura, suggesting that her real identity was to remain hidden Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 658-659: "signora Lugretia Manetti, madre deli mei carissimi figlioli (…), che da me per convenienti mei rispetti è statta nominata molto tempo Laura". In the citizenship petition presented by their sons, discussed in Chapter 5, Helman and Manetti are referred to as man and wife, though it is specified that the marital ceremony was never concluded: ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.141, c.181r, 14 August 1606: "haver lui procreato essi figli con D. Lugretia Manetti sua moglie, et lui suo marito, ma suspeso il velarsi, et sposarsi in faccia de santa chiesa per certi suoi rispetti". See on clandestine marriages in Venice Ferraro, *Marriage wars*, 38-39.
[78] Brulez (ed.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. I, 659: "et la raccomando alli mei comissarii, essendosi sempre deportata bene et honoratamente".
[79] ASV, VSM, Risposte, r.140, c.81v, 26 May 1600.

merchant Stefano van Neste who himself had acquired the *cittadinanza* status only fifteen years earlier.[80] Van Axel's own application for citizenship, however, was just the beginning of his attempts to forge a closer bond with the Venetian state, as will be discussed below.

Martin Hureau and Alvise du Bois might not be able to point to their own wives when they summed up the evidence of their devotion to the Venetian Republic in their *cittadinanza* request in 1614, but they did emphatically call attention to another one of their accomplishments, explaining that they had married a *germana* (sister) to a Venetian nobleman.[81] Hureau and Du Bois were referring to Catarina Tilmans, daughter of trader Guglielmo Tilmans, and Maria, one of the daughters of Balthasar Charles senior.[82] The relationship between Catarina and the two traders was rather more complex than the term *germana* would lead one to conclude: Pietro Pellicorno, the maternal uncle of both Hureau and Du Bois, was married to another of Charles' daughters, making them and Catarina cousins by marriage.[83] This interlocking group of Netherlandish merchant families in Venice clearly favoured marital bonds to provide a foundation for their economic alliances; yet this time the proposed match of one of the traders' relatives was to extend well beyond their own circle.

After decades of choosing marriage partners from other Netherlandish families engaged in Italian trade, the merchants now had acquired enough wealth and prestige in Venice to arrange intermarriage with the patriciate. When Pellicorno died in 1607, Martin Hureau and Alvise du Bois took over the family firm and assumed responsibility for the conjoined families. Given that Guglielmo Tilmans was based at Pesaro, Hureau and Du Bois represented the interests of their cousin Catarina in 1610 during the marriage negotiations with the patrician Girolamo Corner (Cornaro), from a branch of the Corner family that had faced declining fortunes in the sixteenth century.[84] For the Corners the matrimony offered a substantial financial injection: Venetian noblewomen could not wed

[80] ASV, CRD, b.19, 3 April 1628: "havendo anco preso per moglie dona cittadina venetiana, et con essa procreato molti figlioli". See the reply by the *Cinque Savi* in VSM, Risposte, r.147, c.178r, 5 June 1628.
[81] ASV, CRD, b.13, 24 October 1614.
[82] Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2248.
[83] For these family relations, see above, Chapter 4, 99-101.
[84] Giacomo Alvise, Girolamo's father, was a friend of Galileo Galilei and a collector of books. He seems to have been more interested in science than commerce or politics, see *Dizionario biografico*, vol. 29, 241-243; Maschietto, *Elena Lucrezia Cornaro*, 14-15, 65-66.

outside the patriciate without tarnishing their family's honour, but patrician men could marry down and, as the anonymous author of the *Discorso aristocratico sopra il governo de' signori venetiani* (1675) stated, needy patricians gladly took "opulent commoner brides".[85] If economic considerations were a deciding factor in Corner's choice to take Catarina as his bride, for the Netherlandish clan the prospective match promised connections to the Venetian ruling elite and ensuing prestige.

Alvise du Bois and her brother represented Catarina when in June 1610 the engagement, the so-called *nozze*, was contracted, establishing the relationship between the prospective spouses and concluding the dowry arrangements.[86] Since the fifteenth century the Venetian state had unsuccessfully tried to control the inflation of patrician dowries, by fixing the legal maximum at 1,600 ducats in 1420, but by 1575 the legal dowry ceiling had risen to 6,000.[87] Yet all these laws were to little avail and Ambassador Henry Wotton wrote in 1608 that "no gentleman's daughter requir[ed] less for the bestowing of her than twenty-five or thirty thousand ducats of present money, which some two hundred years since was a good provision in the public treasury".[88] By the first half of the seventeenth century the highest dowries had reached a level of 40-50,000 ducats.[89]

The *nozze* between the Tilmans and Corner families was registered with the *Avogaria di Comun* on 3 June 1610 and listed the legal maximum of 6,000 ducats, but this was obviously not sufficient to induce a patrician to marry a non-noble girl.[90] In fact, just the day before an agreement between the two families had been drawn up at Corner's house in San Luca, which fixed Catarina's dowry at the staggering sum of 44,000 ducats,

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[85] Cited by Sperling, *Convents*, 62. The richest patricians rarely married non-noble wives, nor did those from the poorest families, who saw the newcomers as competitors for remunerated offices. The middle group, consisting of patricians, wealthy enough to consider a political career, but in need of extra funds were the most likely to seek a bride outside the patriciate.

[86] Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2600. See Labalme, Sanguineti White, and Carroll, "How to (and not to) get married", 44, for an explanation of the Venetian wedding terminology and rituals.

[87] Average noble dowries rose by 350 per cent over a period of 180 years, see Chojnacki, "Marriage regulations", 56-70. For the sumptuary laws controlling the dowry levels from 1420 until 1644, see Bellavitis, "Mythe", 154-162.

[88] Pearsall Smith (ed.), *The life and letters*, vol. I, 439.

[89] For top level dowries in the seventeenth century, Sperling, *Convents*, 34.

[90] ASV, AC, Contratto di nozze, b.115, 3 June 1610. The two witnesses were Alvise du Bois and Matteo van Loosen.

not including the clothes and furniture that she would bring to the household.[91] The level of the dowry brought by a bride reflected the status of her husband's family, which is probably why the agreement contained a clause insisted upon by Girolamo Corner stating that in the official marriage contract the dowry would be set at 55,000 ducats, but that he would never claim the additional 11,000. The contract was drawn up accordingly and registered with the notary, stipulating that the bulk of Catarina's dowry was to be invested in real estate and land.[92] The successful merging of the two houses - one Netherlandish and mercantile, the other Venetian and patrician - was symbolized in the furnishing of the Corner *portico*, where five portraits of members of the Tilmans family hung next to a picture of Caterina Corner, the fifteenth-century queen of Cyprus and the most prestigious ancestor of Girolamo Corner.[93]

By providing Catarina with such a handsome dowry, the Netherlandish merchants succeeded in, what Wotton called, buying a patrician son-in-law, an achievement they referenced in their petition to the Venetian authorities some four years later, pointing out that it was common knowledge that they had been able to provide a large sum of cash as a dowry.[94] The Corner family gained a substantial financial benefit and the appearance of even more prestige and wealth through the inflated marriage contract, while at the same time the financial settlement bound the patrician family firmly to the Netherlandish traders. Corner died in January 1625 and Catarina Tilmans passed away in November of

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[91] Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2600. The dowry was to be paid in installments: with 10,000 ducats immediately transferred through the bank, 20,000 ducats given to Corner in cash, 12,000 ducats to be paid to him in a year's time, and the final 2,000 ducats upon the birth of their first child. The clothes and other goods Catarina was given formed her *corredo* or trousseau. The dowry was a contribution by the bride's family to the newlyweds' household and conveyed to the husband, reverting to the wife or her heirs once the marriage ended. The *corredo*, on the other hand, was a gift of clothing or jewellery for the bride's own use. See, on the nature and changing characteristics of the *corredo*, Chojnacki, "From trousseau", which previously appeared in slightly altered form in Queller and Madden (eds.), *Medieval and Renaissance Venice*, 141-165.

[92] Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2601, 3 June 1610; ASP, Archivio Parrocchiale di S. Sofia, Matrimoni, b.3 (1604-1624). The marriage took place on 22 November 1610 at Santa Sofia, and was registered in the parish records on 19 December. Catarina's witnesses at the wedding were Du Bois, Van Loosen - both living in the house of their late uncle Pellicorno at Santa Sofia - and Balthasar Charles, ASV, AC, b.82/2, 19 December 1610.

[93] Caterina Corner had married the last king of Cyprus, James II, in 1472 and after his death she abdicated, bringing the island under the domain of the Venetian Republic, Lane, *Venice*, 298. This branch of the Corner family got the name 'Piscopia' from an estate they acquired on the island of Cyprus in the second half of the fourteenth century.

[94] ASV, CRD, b.13, 24 October 1614: "et in particolare con haver noi maritato in gentilhuomo venetiano una nostra germana dandole in dote cosi grossa summa di danari contanti, com' è notorio".

1629, leaving four sons and two daughters who as long as they were underage, remained under the tuition and administration of her father and after his death, of her relatives Matteo van Loosen and Sebastiano de Cuyper, who continued to manage the Corner-Tilman estate even after the children had reached maturity.[95]

Yet for a non-noble woman to marry into the Venetian ruling class was not simply a matter of bringing a large dowry. The genealogical purity of the patriciate had become inextricably intertwined with its governing mission, and by the fifteenth century regulating noble marriages had become a means by which the state sought to preserve political stability. To qualify for entry into the Great Council, sons had to be born of patrician fathers and mothers whose pedigree and identity were worthy of a noble status.[96] Mothers born of noble families obviously met these criteria, but a non-noble bride-to-be was subjected to an investigation of her virtue and to establish that her father and grandfather had not earned their living from manual labour. These investigations to determine the right to patrician status, or *prove di nobiltà*, were carried out by the *Avogaria di Comun*, the magistracy that controlled access to the patriciate.[97] The bride's family and then the *Avogadori* called witnesses, who had to testify to the girl's high merit and her family's good standing.

Caterina Tilmans was accepted on 23 May 1610 after her antecedents had been scrutinized, but she was not the only daughter of a Netherlandish merchant destined to marry into the patriciate. Elisabetta Stricher, daughter of Giacomo Stricher (Jacob Strijcker), the Dutch consul between 1648 and 1687, was accepted by the *Avogaria* on 18 January 1692. Although this is a rather late example, her case offers the opportunity to reconstruct the *Avogaria*'s investigation and the witnesses' accounts, giving an insight into the direct environment of the Netherlandish merchant and his family.[98] Elisabetta had started off her request for acceptance by enumerating the merits of her family, particularly the contributions her father had made to the war against the Ottomans,

[95] For Catarina Tilmans' testament, see ASV, NT, b.757, 25 October 1629. One of her granddaughters was Elena Lucrezia Corner Piscopia, the first woman to receive a university degree, when she was awarded a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Padua in 1678, Maschietto, *Elena Lucrezia Cornaro*.
[96] See, on state control over noble marriages and the role of mothers, Chojnacki, "Marriage regulations", which was previously published, in slightly altered form, as Chojnacki, "Nobility, women, and the state".
[97] See Cowan, "Love, honour" on the *prove di nobiltà*.
[98] ASV, AC, Prove di nobiltà, b.247, no.80. This is the case which Cowan examines in great detail in his article "Foreigners and the city".

providing the Republic with ships, ship supplies, and food as well as a considerable loan of 40,000 ducats.[99] To prove her family's and her own worth, Elisabetta called on a number of witnesses: the priest from the parish Santa Maria Formosa testified that Stricher had died a Roman Catholic in September 1687, and that Elisabetta herself attended services at his church. Two merchants, Giovanni Antonio van Mere and Francesco Borel told the *Avogaria* that they had known her father, though not her grandfather, for a long time and corroborated the rest of Elisabetta's statement.[100]

The Venetian magistrates started their own investigation, interrogating those who had been in contact with the Strichers. First they called up witnesses who had known the consul and his family in Venice, starting with the consul's compatriots and tradesmen from the parish Santa Maria Formosa. Two tailors from the Low Countries told the magistrates that both Elisabetta and her mother had been clients and that the Stricher women had never given cause to doubt their virtue. For more information they directed the investigators to a greengrocer's in the Calle Longa di Santa Maria Formosa who was old enough to have known Stricher himself. Andrea Andreis knew where Stricher had lived, and could provide the *Avogaria* with more detailed information, stating that Stricher had been an honourable merchant, who had maintained his reputation even when faced with bankruptcy. Another priest from the Santa Maria Formosa parish vouched for the Stricher mother and daughter, declaring that both were 'santarelle' and had always behaved as modest women.

After having questioned those living and trading in proximity to Elisabetta and her parents, the *Avogaria* turned to members of the Netherlandish mercantile community to investigate her antecedents. Cornelio van Teijlingen, originally from Amsterdam, had been living in Venice for thirteen years when he testified that he had only known the consul by sight. When asked whether there were any merchants old enough to have known Stricher or his father personally, he directed them to one of the members of the extensive Charles family, Simon Charles, son of Gasparo. Simon had lived in Venice for twenty-one years and confirmed Elisabetta's account on all points. A tailor from Holland, who had been in Venice for twenty-three years, had known both mother and Elisabetta

[99] ASV, AC, Prove di nobiltà, b.247, no.80, c.18r-30r.
[100] ASV, AC, Prove di nobiltà, b.247, no.80, c.6r-7r.

because they had ordered their clothes from him and declared that they were well respected and well behaved.

The difficulty in determining whether or not Elisabetta Stricher was worthy of marrying a Venetian patrician was that she was the first generation of Strichers born in Venice. To establish the credentials of Giacomo Stricher's and his wife's family, the *Avogaria* resorted to declarations from merchants and regents from Amsterdam and Utrecht, supplied by the family, as well as the translated marriage contract of Stricher and his wife, Elisabetta Rodenburgh, from 1641.[101] The documents from the Dutch Republic combined with the testimonies of resident Netherlanders and Venetian neighbours provided the *Avogaria* with enough evidence for them to agree that Elisabetta would make a worthy wife for a Venetian nobleman, just as they had accepted Catarina Tilmans some eighty years earlier. Another daughter of a Netherlandish merchant, Isabella van Axel, daughter of Adolfo, even married into the patriciate twice. Matrimony was one way of forging closer bonds with the Venetian nobility, and for the Van Axel family these marriage alliances were part of a trajectory which culminated in their aggregation to the patriciate.

Entering the Venetian patriciate

By the first half of the seventeenth century the Venetian patriciate was experiencing a demographic crisis, caused by the tendency of noble families to restrict marriages in an attempt to maintain the family property intact and further aggravated by the plague epidemic of 1629-1631.[102] In the reduced group of patricians, differences in prosperity grew more and more marked as marital alliances caused wealth to be concentrated in the hands of just a few families. Consequently it became increasingly difficult to find men who were willing and able to hold unremunerated offices in the Venetian government, which often required substantial personal expenditure. The necessity of recruiting new

[101] ASV, AC, Prove di nobiltà, b.247, no.80, c.16r. Elisabetta Rodenburgh's uncle, Theodoor, was one of her witnesses. He was a diplomat in the service of the Dutch Republic. The others were Jacob van Neck, Antonie Oetgens van Waveren, and Gerard Schaep, all family relations as well as Amsterdam regents, see Elias, *De vroedschap*, vol. I, 355-356.

[102] Hunecke, "Matrimonio"; Davis, *The decline*, 54ff. See, for the increasing differences in wealth among patricians, also Megna, *Ricchezza e povertà*, 104-182.

men of wealth into the nobility coincided with a desperate need for state revenue as a result of new Venetian - Ottoman conflicts during the second half of the seventeenth century. The financial pressure stemming from the War of Candia and the Wars of Morea (1684 - 1699 and 1716 - 1718) forced the patricians to resort to an exceptional solution, admitting new families who could pay an entry fee in cash of 60,000 ducats and an investment of another 40,000 ducats in the *Zecca*, Venice's Mint.[103]

The last time a group of new nobles had been admitted to the Great Council had been at the end of the War of Chioggia in 1381, when thirty new families were granted the status of patricians as a token of appreciation for their contribution to the war effort. Thereafter the patriciate remained a closed, hereditary caste for almost three centuries, until 128 new families were admitted between 1646 and 1718.[104] The aggregation of such a large number of new families provoked negative reactions from members of the established nobility, who expressed their disapproval in anonymous hand-written pamphlets or *cronachette*. These chronicles were often produced by anonymous members of the established patriciate, opposed to the aggregations. They consisted of information from the petitions submitted by families wishing to become patricians, mixed with a substantial dose of gossip. The writers of the *cronachette* protested that the newcomers had just exchanged the counter of their shops for the hall of the Great Council, rising straight from 'servility to the most conspicuous condition that exists in this *patria*'.[105] Recent research has shown, however, that the inclusion of a large number of new nobles should not exclusively be seen as an abrupt break with tradition, but rather as the legal culmination of a longer process of rapprochement between the established nobility and those families that requested to be admitted.[106]

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[103] The aggregation of new families started with a petition in 1646 from the *cittadino* family Labia, whose wealth was proverbial, requesting admission to the nobility. After various deliberations in the Great Council, the Labia were accepted in July of that same year, opening up the way for other families as well. The new families were admitted in the periods 1646-1669 and 1685-1718, Raines, *L' invention*, 633-653; Raines, "Pouvoir ou privilèges nobiliares", particularly 838-839.

[104] See, on honorary membership and the addition of new families to the patriciate before 1646, Cowan, "New families", 56-57.

[105] Raines, *L' invention*, 763-775, on the chronicles discussing the origins of new families.

[106] Raines, "Strategie matrimoniali e giochi di potere". See also Cowan, "New families", 55, who shows that the reactions of outrage did not form an obstacle for intensive intermarriage between the established patriciate and the newly admitted families.

Two Netherlandish families gained entrance into the patriciate after 1646, the Van Axels on 25 March 1665 and the Ghelthof family on 22 September 1697. Strictly speaking, their aggregation falls outside the chronological scope of this study; yet precisely because it was often the result of a long-term trajectory, the admittance of these Netherlanders throws light on their position and aims during their stay in Venice as well as on the attitude of the established patriciate to their inclusion. To start with the latter, the new families can be roughly divided into three different types: Terraferma nobility, citizens from the ranks of the *Cancelleria Ducale*, and rich merchants. The first two categories evoked relatively little opposition, since the social origins of the nobility from the Terraferma were similar to those of the Venetian patriciate, and the *cittadini* were the only other privileged group in Venetian society outside the patriciate; the citizen families applying for admission often had a long tradition of occupying government posts in the Republic.[107]

Rich *popolano* merchants, however, were judged to be of lower social standing even if they could compete with the Venetian elite in material wealth, and traders of foreign origin seeking patrician membership were regarded with particular suspicion.[108] A case in point is the Van Axel family. When their request for patrician status was put to the vote in the Great Council on 25 May 1665, it resulted in 558 votes in favour, 286 against, and 14 abstentions. Only two other new families met with more resistance.[109]

Even if a significant number of Council members voted against their acceptance, the Van Axel family succeeded in gaining entrance to the nobility after a protracted process of affiliation to Venetian society, which made them acceptable to the majority of the patricians in the Great Council. Adolfo van Axel was the first to settle in Venice, probably around 1609, and for more than a decade he worked for the firm of his relatives, the Van Castre brothers who were also originally from Malines.[110] By 1621 he had set up

[107] See, for the social origins of the new families, Cowan, "New families", 58-59: out of a total of 128 new families, 70 were either newcomers to the city of Venice or were of recent immigrant origin.
[108] No English families ever resided long enough or had acquired sufficient standing to request admission. In addition to the two Netherlandish families, there were eight other foreign families seeking entry; they were either from other Italian states or from Germany, Cowan, "New families", 63.
[109] For the vote on the Van Axel aggregation, see Marciana, Cod. Marc. VIII, b.183 (8161), c.112. In comparison, the Suriano family, who were Venetian citizens, only received 40 votes against and 6 abstentions, Cowan, "New families", 67.
[110] The earliest mention of Adolfo van Axel in the notarial records collected by Brulez and Devos is from April of that year, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.2377. See, for his geographical

his own firm with the Netherlanders Antonio Retano, Paolo van Gansepoel, and Michiel van der Casteele, and by 1630 he worked with his brother Francesco and his father-in-law Stefano van Neste in the firm Van Neste and Van Axel, trading in goods such as currants, salt, Venetian mirrors, and wool.[111] Within a few decades, Adolfo had established himself as an active trader with a wide range of relations, both economic and social, with his compatriots, but this did not mean that the Van Axel family remained isolated in the Netherlandish community. Adolfo's legal status was enhanced when he was granted Venetian citizenship in 1628 and thirty-seven years later his sons were accepted among the Venetian nobility, after having contributed ships and money to the War of Candia.[112] During that time the Van Axel family had secured close contacts with the patriciate and steadily climbed the Venetian social ladder.

Adolfo died in 1637, when his children were still too young to marry. He left the job of finding suitable husbands for his daughter Elisabetta to his three executors, his brother Francesco, his wife, and his father-in-law.[113] Almost twenty years later, on 25 August 1655, she was married to the nobleman Giovanni Battista Barbaro, with the wedding taking place at the Van Axel residence, the fifteenth-century *palazzo* in the parish of Santa Marina, which the family had bought in 1652.[114] This was not Elisabetta's first or last Italian husband. She was the widow of Francesco Sebastiani from Padua, whom she had married in 1645, and after Barbaro's death she wedded another Venetian

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background, Ibidem, no.2729. For his business relations with the Van Castres, who were his uncles, ASV, NA, b.10766, c.26r-26v, 4 January 1621; c.218v-219r, 23 April 1621; c.252v-253r, 29 April 1621; VSM, Risposte, r.146, 5 March 1625.

[111] Van Axel had set up a firm with the Netherlanders Antonio Retano, Paolo van Gansepoel, and Michiel van der Casteele in April 1621, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, no.4135; ASV, NA, b.10803, c.387r-400r, 9 October 1640; GAA, NotArch, no.701, fol.824, 15 May 1635. By the time of Van Axel's death in 1637, his relation with Retano had soured, see Adolfo's testament of 3 January 1636 (m.v.) and the codicil drawn up one day later, ASV, NT, b.757. See, for the partnership between the Van Axel brothers and Van Neste, ASV, NA, b.10783, c.947r-947v, 12 November 1630; ASV, CRD, b.25, 21 July 1634.

[112] See, for the aggregation of the Van Axel family, the almost identical descriptions in two *cronachette*, Marciana, Mss. Italiani, VII, 942 (9014), c.36r; Mss. Italiani, VII, 949 (7908), c.72-73, which state that the Van Axels went bankrupt after their considerable contributions to the Venetian war effort and entrance into the nobility.

[113] ASV, NT, b.757, 3 January 1636 (m.v.).

[114] The *Avogaria di Comun* had given its consent a week earlier, ASV, AC, Matrimoni e figli, Giovanni Battista Barbaro q. Giovanni; ASV, AC, Partitum Declarationum (1589-1663), b.108, c.77v. The couple had three sons, Giacomo Francesco, Giovanni Antonio, and Giovanni Battista.

noble, Antonio Boldù, son of Andrea, in 1662.[115] The undoubtedly sizeable dowry that Barbaro received was raised by the family firm, which during the 1630s and 1640s had been managed by Francesco van Axel and Stefano van Neste, and, after the latter had died, was carried on by Francesco and his two nephews Giovanni Battista and Tomaso Adolfo, sons of the late Adolfo.[116] In his testament Francesco van Axel explicitly referred to Elisabetta's dowry, stating that her wedding to Barbaro had been "at great expense of the Van Axel house".[117] Yet these costs obviously represented an investment to the Netherlandish family, and intermarriage with established noble houses such as the Barbaro and Boldù was a way of better positioning themselves at a time when entrance into the patriciate was a possibility.

Not only did the Van Axel family forge bonds with the old patrician families; in the years leading up to their aggregation they were also in close contact with newly accepted families. In 1650, the Van Axel firm did business with Vicenzo Fini, whose family had been admitted to the patriciate just one year earlier.[118] Giovanni Battista and Tomaso Adolfo van Axel successfully requested admission to the patriciate in 1665. Once they had been accepted, Adolfo's sons, like his daughter, became wealthy potential marriage partners for other patrician families and the next year saw them both getting married. Giovanni Battista wed a girl from an established Venetian family, Margherita Bembo, daughter of Vicenzo, while Tomaso Adolfo married Arcanzola Cassetti, of a family that had become Venetian patricians quite recently, in 1662.[119] It seems highly probable that the Van Axels had concluded promises for a future marriage with both the Bembo and the Cassetti families before their aggregation, thereby securing the support of the members of these houses in the Great Council.

The desire to firmly establish the family in Venice can be read in the provisions Francesco van Axel made in his last will in 1663, in which he specified that he and his

[115] The wedding to Antonio Boldù took place at the church of San Gregorio at 28 Settember 1662. The dowry was registered as being 1,000 ducats in cash, 2,000 ducats in jewellery, furniture valued at 1,800 ducats as well as a large amount of land on the Terraferma, including the land Elisabetta had bought from the Barbaro family with the 2,000 ducats which her uncle and brothers had added to her dowry when she married Giovanni Battista Barbaro, ASV, AC, b.120/10, 21 September 1662.
[116] See, for example, ASV, NA, b.10798, c.482r, 20 July 1638; b.10798, c.450v-451v, 8 July 1638; b.10799, c.628r-628v, 16 September 1638. See also the many notarial records in b.10801-10803.
[117] ASV, NT, b.936, 10 October 1665: "con grandissimo spesa della chasa".
[118] ASV, NA, b.10822, c.31v-32r, 12 March 1650.
[119] Raines, *L' invention*, 747.

nephews had separated themselves from the Van Axel house run in Amsterdam by his only surviving brother, Uberto (Lubbert).[120] Giovanni Battista and Tomaso Adolfo were to continue the Venetian firm together and Francesco impressed on them that under no circumstances were they to let the family name be extinguished.[121] His exhortations did not go unheeded: during the years the Van Axels had lived and traded in Venice they had made a considerable fortune which enabled them to invest large amounts of money in Elisabetta's dowries and pay the admission fee of 100,000 ducats. They formed bonds with established and new noblemen, which meant that by the time they requested admittance to the Venetian nobility, they enjoyed the support of a lobby within the patriciate strong enough to overcome the significant opposition which applications by foreign commoners evoked.

In their request, Giovanni Battista and Tomaso Adolfo took care to explain that their family was worthy of the patrician title: they pointed out that their family had obtained nobility in the province of Flanders in the twelfth century, and they stressed that they had always been good Catholics, with one of their forefathers having participated in the crusades in 1335.[122] Giovanni Battista and Tomaso Adolfo stressed their contributions to the city's commerce as well. They also mentioned that they both had been born in Venice, and pointed out that one sister had married into the patriciate while the other had become a nun. The recent past of the Low Countries and the Venetian myth became interwoven in the part of their petition where they explained that their father had fled his country because of the military violence during the Revolt, exchanging the Catholic city of Malines for the peace and security offered by the *Serenissima*. By the time of Francesco van Axel's death on 12 October 1665, his nephews could claim the title of 'nobili veneti'.[123]

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[120] Lubbert van Axel was a merchant and ship-owner in Amsterdam, Brulez and Devos (eds.), *Marchands flamands*, vol. II, nos.3241; 3542; 3559; 3569; 3576.

[121] ASV, NT, b.936: if need be his other nephew Giovanni Alberto, the son of his Amsterdam-based brother, was to come to Venice to continue the family name.

[122] Marciana, Cod. Marc. VIII, b.183 (8161), c.112. The Van Axel brothers paid 50,000 ducats in cash and invested the same amount in the *Zecca*.

[123] ASV, NT, b.936. The death of Francesco was reported to the notary by the "Ill.mi ss.ri Gio Batta , e Tomaso Adolfo van Axele nobili veneti, nipoti, et heredi del sr. testatore".

The inclusion of the second family of Netherlandish origin took place in 1689, during the second phase (between 1685 and 1718) that newcomers were accepted. By this time *popolano* families met with much less disapproval, and the Ghelthof petition provoked only 131 negative votes, against 802 positive ones and ten abstentions.[124] Nonetheless, the admission of the Ghelthofs also aroused some animosity. Andrea Ghelthof, a merchant from Antwerp, had settled in Venice during the late 1630s and traded under the firm of Paolo Ramacher and Andrea Ghelthof.[125] After his death in 1652, his affairs were taken over by his nephew Marino in partnership with Francesco Bourel.[126] Business for Andrea must have been good: when the perceptive Amsterdam merchant and poet Jan Six van Chandelier visited Venice on a business trip in 1650-1651, he wrote two poems on the origins of the name Ghelthof - which in Dutch literally means 'court of money' - jokingly expressing the hope that the Venetians, badly in need of money because of the war over Crete, would not guess the meaning of his last name for then they would take him to be an easy fountain of riches.[127] This was not merely a pun on the Ghelthof name, but also a reference to the family's actual wealth; when Andrea's nephew Marino made his last will in 1689, he could instruct his heirs to withdraw the entrance fee of 100,000 ducats from his business firm and from his other investments, particularly those in merchandise sent on the Spanish convoys to South America.[128]

Marino's whole testament reads like an instruction to his heirs on how to attain patrician status. It shows that the Ghelthofs not only had the necessary financial means to enter the patriciate, but that they had the support of members of old noble families as well. In his last will Marino Ghelthof thanked the patrician Tomaso Corner for having taken him into his confidence and begged him to extend his protection to his daughter and her husband, expressing the hope that Corner's sons would continue to watch over the Ghelthof house. After having dealt with the economic and social prerequisites,

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[124] Marciana, Cod. Marc. VIII, b.183 (8161), "Famiglie create patritie Venete", c.197.
[125] See, for example, ASV, NA, b.10797, February 1637, c.828r-828v; October 1640-February 1641, c.538v-539r, 18 December 1640.
[126] ASV, NT, b.509, 10 March 1652.
[127] The two poems, originally published in J. Six van Chandelier, *Poësy* (Amsterdam 1657), are included in Jacobs, "Met oogen slechts daar by", vol. I, 112-114. The second, very short poem, which calls on the imagery from the land of Cockaigne, reads: "Op den toenaam van Adriaan Geldhof:/ Wist heilge Mark uw naam, hy loofde ghy vol geld stakt,/ En hield u, Geldhof, voor een paardeken, dat geld kakt".
[128] ASV, NT, b.167, 28 February 1689. Marino Ghelthof instructed his heirs to withdraw 40,000 ducats from his trading firm and the remaining 60,000 from his other investments.

Marino continued to instruct his heirs on how to preserve the family line as best as they could. With no male offspring, this task fell to his daughter Maria and her husband Giovanni Francesco Anverix, who had served Ghelthof as an apprentice. Ghelthof explicitly told them not to return to Antwerp and when the opportunity presented itself, they were to seek admission to the Venetian nobility under the name of Ghelthof.[129] Their firstborn son would receive an annual legacy of 1,000 ducats and was to be named Marino after his grandfather. This name should then be passed on to each firstborn male child in the following generations. Eight years later, on 16 September 1697, Ghelthof's son-in-law presented his petition to be admitted which was duly accepted by the Great Council.[130]

Far from forming a segregated enclave, the Netherlandish traders had little difficulty in securing a place in Venetian society. Their sumptously decorated homes and country villa's indicate that they blended in with the lifestyle of the Venetian elite. Some traders left the *Serenissima* after a successful career and returned to the Low Countries with their families, as Alvise du Bois did in 1638; others died in Venice, sometimes - as in the case of Giovanni van Mere - leaving illegitimate descendants to carry on trading. Several of these wealthy merchants forged marital bonds with the patriciate for their offspring, providing Venetian nobles a substantial financial boost, while the Van Axel and Ghelthof families even succeeded in gaining access to the patriciate.

After the admission of Marino Ghelthof's son-in-law, some chronicles were quite positive, not disguising Anverix humble origins, but praising his character and good qualities, which made him worthy of the patrician status.[131] Others expressed their disgust: this, some grumbled, is how it came about that the son of an Antwerp tailor, a mere trader's apprentice, acquired the status of Venetian nobleman.[132] Notwithstanding

[129] ASV, NT, b.167, 28 February 1689: "Voglio, et ordino, che all' hora sia procurato di mettere tutti li effetti insieme, et inclinando li sopranominati miei figlia, e genero amatissimi di continuare ad habitar in questa città di Venetia, ne andar più ad habitar in Anversa, se sarà aperta la porta per aggregare a' questa Serenissima nobiltà, voglio si debbano fare con il solo cognome di Ghelthof e niun altro cognome unito".
[130] Marciana, Cod. Marc. VIII, b.183 (8161), c.197.
[131] See, for example, ASV, Misc. Codici I, Storie Venete, 43/iv; Marciana, Cod. Marc. It. VII, 942 (9014), c.25r; Marciana, Cod. Marc. It. VII, 949 (7908), 151.
[132] ASV, Misc. Codici I, Storie Venete, 43/i (formerly Misc. Codici 740/1), c.10r. See also Raines, *L' invention*, 747-748.

these criticisms, both the Van Axel and the Ghelthof families remained part of the patriciate until the conquest by Napoleon put an end to the Venetian Republic in 1797. Their cases show that in the space of two generations, the Netherlandish merchants could follow a trajectory which started with their arrival as immigrants and culminated in their official aggregation to the Venetian patriciate.

Conclusion

Netherlandish merchants succeeded in establishing themselves as a dominant commercial force in Venice between 1590 and 1650, when the city finally lost its control over international commerce. The traders first became indispensable during the last decade of the sixteenth century, when the looming dangers of food shortages and civil unrest confronted the Venetian authorities with problems they could not solve. As grain prices rose to unprecedented heights in the years following 1590, it became clear that the Republic could not fall back on Venetian merchants or their contacts, but had to turn to foreign suppliers to provide the city with the much-needed grain. Their share in the delivery of northern grain in the final decade of the sixteenth century positioned the Netherlandish merchants as important players on the Rialto market.

The arrival and presence of the Netherlanders in Venice illustrates the consequences of the changing balance of European trade around 1600 on a local level. In this case, trade in Baltic grain proved a decisive factor, conforming to the picture Fernand Braudel painted for the entire Mediterranean region. Yet the Netherlanders did not burst unto the Venetian scene out of nowhere, as Braudel's idea of a 'northern invasion' would suggest. Instead, the merchants could build on previously established trade relations between Venice and Antwerp. This Antwerp legacy gave them the necessary experience to deal with Venetian institutions, while their contacts in northern harbours, through their widely scattered family members and colleagues, gave them access to grain and the means to transport it.

Whereas Jonathan Israel described their position as being vulnerable in the first decades after the start of the *Straatvaart*, Venetian source material shows that the Netherlanders in Venice quickly broadened and expanded their commerce. Once the *Straatvaart* had started, Netherlandish ships continued to arrive in the port of Venice, bringing a wide variety of goods, such as fish, timber, lead, and textiles, and exporting Venetian and Levantine commodities. The Netherlandish traders initiated direct trade between Venice and Muscovy, importing hemp, leather and caviar, while also providing the city-state with essential war supplies in years of political tension with the Habsburg or the Ottoman Empires. More than anything else, the shipments of spices arriving from Amsterdam from at least 1605 underlined the Venetian loss of control over international trade.

In addition to their commerce with northern trading centres, the Netherlandish merchants in Venice took part in the lucrative intra-mediterranean trade with the Levant and with Spain, where they often used family members or compatriots as their correspondents. More importantly, they also continued to send valuable fabrics and raw silk from the Levant and the Veneto northwards along the German roads, at least as long as the political situation allowed it. Being able to substitute one trade route for the other gave them a significant advantage over other foreign merchants like the Germans, who were strong on the land-based commerce, but did not have access to a fully developed mercantile marine, or the English, who were successful in Mediterranean maritime trade but not interested in the overland traffic.

This versatility as well as their contacts with Amsterdam, the rising trade centre, consolidated the Netherlanders' position, and by 1607, the *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia* judged them to be the dominant group of immigrant traders. The reports of this institution show how Venetian patricians continually struggled with the weight of their glorious commercial past when dealing with the Netherlanders' presence. Yet the Venetians were also acutely aware of the ongoing changes and realized that the existing protectionist policies had to be adjusted if their city was not to lose out to rival ports like Livorno and Marseille. Accomodating traders with *Ponentine* contacts was the Republic's best option to maintain a viable level of trade.

Israel describes two separate mercantile communities, one consisting of Southern Netherlandish traders who had been in Venice since the sixteenth century, and another one that was formed by Dutch traders arriving after 1609, the year of the truce with Spain. As this book has demonstrated, however, the background of the merchants in Venice was predominantly Southern Netherlandish. Ethnicity was therefore by no means a dividing factor within the small merchant community and any concept of national identity among the merchants was decidedly fluid. Although the majority of traders came from Antwerp or was born within the Antwerp diaspora, the cohesive factors were family ties - existing ones as well as newly forged ones - shared commercial interests, and bonds of friendship, as shown by their inclusion of descendants of Protestant Italian and German families, who often had migrated to the Low Countries themselves and were connected to the Netherlanders through marriage.

The Netherlanders in Venice formed a community that was partly based on natural ties such as provenance, and partly constructed through marriage bonds and the exchange of personal

gifts. In general the traders showed a certain preference for endogamy matches with other Netherlandish families engaged in Italian trade, located either in Venice, the Low Countries, or in one of the other European trading centres with a substantial diaspora community. These kinship ties and commercial contacts connected the merchants to a variety of European trade centres, allowing them the use of multiple trade routes and giving them access to different markets. Within the community, reciprocal bonds based on the Netherlanders' shared provenance and occupation were reaffirmed in several ways. By calling on their compatriots as arbiters in commercial disputes, appointing them as executors of their last will, and by requesting them to stand as godparents to their children, the Netherlandish immigrant traders forged a unity that was close-knit and constantly reinforced, constituting a much more cohesive group than the English, who usually stayed in Venice for only a short while and mostly focused on trade with the Ionian Islands.

Although their origins and business interests were relatively homogeneous, the merchants' religious affiliation was not. Catholics as well as Protestant Netherlanders settled in Venice. Reformed services were condoned, and as long as no native Venetians were present or in danger of conversion, these heterodox traders suffered no hindrance from the Venetian authorities. Their religious heterogeneity posed no obstacle to a strong internal cohesion among the Netherlanders, and both Catholic and Protestant traders formed part of the *nazione fiamminga*, the Netherlandish trading nation.

The nature of the *nazione* demonstrates the various ways in which Venice dealt with different groups of immigrant traders. Unlike in the case of the German or Ottoman merchants, no distinct communal regulations or privileges were laid down in Venetian jurisprudence for traders from the Low Countries. Venice's loss of commercial control meant that the state was no longer in a position to oblige the northern traders to reside in a *fondaco* as it had done with the Germans in previous centuries. The *fondaco* for the Ottoman merchants was instituted in the 1620s primarily to minimize the potential for political conflict with the sultan and to control the contact between Muslims and Christians. The Netherlanders, however, were never perceived as potential political or religious dangers.

The strong cohesion among the members of the *nazione fiamminga*, moreover, was an important instrument in their interaction with the Venetian authorities. They themselves could influence their position, by negotiating extensive privileges which softened traditional Venetian

policies regarding foreign traders. Their control over the supply of grain, spices, and even war materials gave them a powerful bargaining position. Theirs was a less visible and less structured trading nation, based primarily on their social and economic interrelations and lacking formal privileges set down by law; yet it nonetheless provided the traders with a valuable tool to influence economic policies and overcome the disadvantageous position of foreign merchants.

The Netherlandish nation successfully besieged the Venetian government with petitions, aimed at negotiating collective tax reductions or other types of commercial rights. This continuous stream of petitions points to a coordinated action on the part of the Netherlandish merchants. From the archives of the *Collegio* and the *Cinque Savi*, it becomes clear that when the moment of expiration of a particular concession drew near, the Netherlandish nation always submitted a new petition, seeking to prolong or extend the original privilege. Through the *via supplicationis* the *nazione* successfully negotiated an improved economic position for its members. The Netherlanders might point to the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* in their petitions when complaining of their own position, but since they themselves never actually requested a similar arrangement, this primarily had a rhetorical purpose; while they did not have exactly the same privileges as conceded to the Germans, they were also free of the strict controls connected with having to reside and trade in a *fondaco*. By using petitions, the Netherlanders operated within existing Venetian structures and succeeded in directly influencing legislation, forcing it to open up and become more flexible. The weakening of its own trading position and the increasing competition from other Mediterranean ports made the Venetian government more sensitive to the Netherlanders' needs and more readily inclined to grant their requests.

Instead of developing into an extension of the Dutch state, the Netherlanders maintained a more complex relationship with the United Provinces. The traders could influence the appointment and position of the consuls by petitioning the States General and by mobilizing their correspondents in the United Provinces. As relations between the Dutch Republic and Venice intensified after 1609, the merchants became closely involved in the collaboration between the two republics. They played an important role in the system of subsidies between the United Provinces and Venice, supplying armaments, and assisting in the payment of Dutch troops and ships in the service of the Italian city-state. The *nazione* used these efforts to add more weight to its petitions and further strengthen its position.

The nation also supplied the individual immigrant merchant with a safety net and an alternative to the extensive support network of close family and friends in the North. It provided various forms of assistance, from intercession with the Venetian authorities to the handing out of advice and sums of money. However, the solidarity, close business connections, and social ties within their community did not imply that the Netherlanders formed a segregated enclave in early modern Venice, as was suggested by Alexander Cowan. Instead, the Netherlanders were treated with great leniency. Though they might on occasion have been seen as a commercial threat, the traders were not subject to any special government restrictions and any tensions were fought out exclusively on paper, through petitions, reports by the *Cinque Savi*, and the Senate's decisions, often resulting in a victory for the Netherlanders. By using their wealth and strong economic position, the merchants secured their place in the urban fabric and often developed close relations with their Venetian neighbours. They could afford to live in expensive and sizeable houses in the more centrally located neighbourhoods, and they easily adapted to a Venetian lifestyle. Both in- and outside their homes they presented themselves as successful international traders.

Some Netherlandish families were able to forge marriage bonds with the Venetian elite. Netherlandish daughters with ample dowries were attractive marriage partners for patricians in need of financial backing, while these marital alliances provided the merchants with connections to the higher strata of Venetian society. As in the case of the wealthy Van Axels, intermarriage with patricians was a clear and public sign of their rising social status, which reached its apex when they succeeded in being admitted into the Venetian patriciate themselves. Of course, not all families could or wished to invest so much time, energy, and money in an effort to blend into Venetian society. Yet the dynastic politics of the Van Axel and Ghelthof families show that in the wake of the arrival of the Netherlandish merchants, Venice had to come to terms with significant changes affecting the two pillars on which its identity had rested: the loss of its supremacy in maritime commerce and the opening up to new families of its aristocracy, which had been a closed hereditary caste for almost three and a half centuries.

Summary

Kooplieden uit de Nederlanden ontwikkelden zich tussen 1590 en 1650 tot een belangrijke economische factor in Venetië. Dit kwam duidelijk tot uiting in 1596, toen de Venetiaanse Senaat in de voorbereiding voor het oprichten van een nieuwe staatsbank voor het eerst ook de gemeenschap van Nederlandse[1] handelaren, de *nazione fiamminga*, consulteerde. Deze studie onderzoekt waarom de Nederlanders zich in Venetië vestigden en hoe ze erin slaagden zich een sterke positie te verwerven in een stad waar de internationale handel van oudsher was voorbehouden aan de eigen elite. De aanwezigheid en de activiteiten van de Nederlandse handelaren in Venetië vormen tegelijkertijd een uiting en een medeoorzaak van de veranderende verhoudingen in de internationale handel rond 1600.

Gedurende de veertiende en vijftiende eeuw hadden de Venetianen de lucratieve handel in peper en specerijen gedomineerd. Zij verzorgden met hun galeien de aanvoer van deze Aziatische producten naar havens zoals Lissabon, Londen, Brugge en Antwerpen, terwijl de Duitse steden via de landroutes over de Alpen werden bevoorraad. De staat beschermde en ondersteunde de internationale handel waarop de Venetiaanse elite het monopolie had. Na de ontdekking van de directe route naar Azië door de Portugezen begon de positie van Venetië echter af te brokkelen. Toen de Engelse East India Company en Nederlandse Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in respectievelijk 1600 en 1602 specerijen rechtstreeks naar Europa begonnen te vervoeren, verloor Venetië definitief haar positie als handelsgrootmacht. Het zwaartepunt van de internationale handel verschoof van de Middellandse Zee naar de havens van Noordwest-Europa.

In deze voor Venetië problematische jaren was de stad gedwongen gebruik te maken van de diensten van buitenlandse kooplieden. Hoe groot die afhankelijkheid was, werd voor het eerst duidelijk tijdens het laatste decennium van de zestiende eeuw, toen Venetië een aantal jaren achtereen werd getroffen door hongersnoden. Graantekorten leidden vanaf 1590 tot onrust onder de Venetiaanse bevolking, maar de overheid bleek niet in staat zelf voor de bevoorrading van de stad te zorgen. De ongekende stijging van de graanprijzen maakte de overzeese import van graan uit Noord-Europa tot een aantrekkelijke optie voor kooplieden met voldoende handelscontacten

[1] Met de term 'Nederlands' bedoel ik hier kooplieden afkomstig uit het complex van de zeventien gewesten dat tijdens de Opstand uitéén zou vallen in de Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Provinciën in het noorden en de Spaanse Nederlanden in het zuiden. In vroegmodern Italië werd met 'fiammingo' eveneens iemand afkomstig uit de Nederlanden aangeduid, zonder verdere specificatie.

in deze regio. Het aantal Venetiaanse handelaren in Europese havens was echter vanaf het begin van de zestiende eeuw steeds verder teruggelopen en zij konden dus niet voor de noodzakelijke aanvoer zorgen. Nederlandse kooplieden konden wel van de situatie profiteren en met hun aandeel in de import van Baltisch graan slaagden ze erin zich definitief te vestigen als belangrijke spelers op de Venetiaanse markt.

Dat met de aanvoer van graan uit het Oostzeegebied de Nederlandse kooplieden zich een steviger positie verworven in Venetië past in het beeld dat Fernand Braudel schetste voor het hele Middellandse Zeegebied aan het einde van de zestiende eeuw. Toch behoeft dit beeld enige nuancering. Braudel gebruikte voor zijn beschrijving van de toenemende aanwezigheid van kooplieden uit Engeland en de Nederlanden in het Middellandse Zeegebied in de tweede helft van de zestiende eeuw de term 'Noordelijke invasie'. Dit suggereert dat de Nederlandse kooplieden vanuit het niets de Venetiaanse markt binnendrongen. In plaats daarvan bouwden deze handelaren juist voort op eerdere handelscontacten tussen Venetië en Antwerpen, die vooral bestonden uit de handel in textiel via de landroutes. Hun ervaring in de landhandel had de Nederlandse kooplieden vertrouwd gemaakt met de Venetiaanse instituties, terwijl hun contacten met familieleden en collega's in de noordelijke havens toegang boden tot het graan en schepen om het te vervoeren.

Jonathan Israel stelt dat gedurende de eerste decennia de positie van de Nederlanders in de Straatvaart kwetsbaar was en slechts gebaseerd op de aanvoer van graan. Venetiaans materiaal laat echter zien dat de Nederlandse kooplieden in Venetië al snel na het begin van de Straatvaart in 1590 hun handel uitbreidden. Schepen uit de Nederlanden bleven de Venetiaanse haven bevaren en de kooplieden importeerden, naast graan in de jaren van hongersnood, een breed scala aan goederen, zoals vis, hout, lood, en textiel, terwijl ze als retourvracht Venetiaanse en Levantse producten naar het Noorden brachten. Ook initieerden de Nederlandse handelaren de directe handel tussen Venetië en Moskovië, waarbij het vooral ging om de import van hennep, leer en kaviaar. Daarnaast voorzagen ze de Venetiaanse Republiek van oorlogsmaterieel tijdens conflicten met de Habsburgers en het Ottomaanse Rijk. Het waren bovenal de ladingen specerijen en peper die vanaf 1605 vanuit Amsterdam aankwamen die benadrukten dat Venetië haar controle over de internationale handel had verloren. Symptomatisch is het feit dat deze goederen vanaf 1626 als westerse waren werden aangeduid.

De Nederlandse kooplieden in Venetië waren niet alleen actief in de maritieme handel met Noord-Europa, maar namen bovendien deel aan de lucratieve intramediterrane handel met de Levant en Spanje. Ook hier gebruikten ze vaak familieleden of landgenoten als contactpersonen. Een belangrijk onderdeel van hun commerciële activiteiten bleef ondertussen de handel over land tussen Venetië en het Noorden. Voor het verzenden van Venetiaanse en Levantse kostbare stoffen en ruwe zijde prefereerden de kooplieden de landroutes door Duitsland. Toen echter de Dertigjarige Oorlog (1618-1648) uitbrak, raakte deze handel ernstig verstoord, wat maakte dat de Nederlanders alsnog het risico namen om deze kwetsbare goederen over zee naar Amsterdam te transporteren. De zee- en landroutes waar de Nederlandse kooplieden gebruik van maakten, konden elkaar dus aanvullen en zelfs vervangen. Dit zorgde voor een belangrijke voorsprong op andere buitenlandse kooplieden in Venetië zoals de Duitsers, die vrijwel uitsluitend actief waren op de landroutes, en de Engelsen, die slechts geïnteresseerd waren in de maritieme handel.

Hun flexibiliteit en hun contacten met Amsterdam, het belangrijkste handelscentrum van Europa in deze periode, gaven de Nederlanders in Venetië een buitengewoon stevige positie: in 1607 deelde de *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*, de Venetiaanse Kamer van Koophandel, mee dat deze kooplieden nu de belangrijkste groep buitenlandse handelaren in Venetië waren. De rapporten van de *Cinque Savi* laten zien hoe de herinnering aan de Venetiaanse gloriedagen steeds meespeelde wanneer er beslissingen moesten worden genomen met betrekking tot de Nederlandse kooplieden. De neiging om de handel met de Levant als het exclusieve domein te zien van het Venetiaanse patriciaat en om de volledige controle te houden over de internationale handel in de stad bleef aanwezig. Tegelijkertijd realiseerden de Venetianen zich dat de commerciële verhoudingen veranderden en dat havens zoals Livorno en Marseille belangrijke concurrenten vormden in de Middellandse Zee. De spanning tussen de tradionele protectionistische politiek en de veranderende omstandigheden was een permanent onderdeel van de discussies van de *Cinque Savi*, maar in de meeste gevallen besloot men tot het tegemoetkomen aan de wensen van handelaren met contacten in West-Europa om het niveau van de handel in Venetië op peil te houden.

Israel beschrijft het bestaan van twee verschillende Nederlandse koopliedengemeenschappen in Venetië, waarbij de eerste bestond uit Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden die vanaf de zestiende eeuw in de stad actief waren. De andere gemeenschap bestond uit Noord-Nederlanders en ontstond

vanaf 1609, het jaar van het sluiten van het Twaalfjarig Bestand, toen de Spaanse embargo's tegen de handel vanuit de Nederlandse Republiek wegvielen en de Straatvaart zich verder kon ontwikkelen. Deze studie laat echter zien dat het merendeel van de Nederlandse kooplieden in Venetië een Zuid-Nederlandse achtergrond had. De meerderheid was van Antwerpse afkomst of geboren in de Antwerpse diaspora. Wel hadden vele in Venetië gevestigde kooplieden familieleden die naar Amsterdam of andere steden in de Nederlandse Republiek waren uitgeweken.

De Nederlandse kooplieden in Venetië vormden een gemeenschap die deels gebaseerd was op natuurlijke banden, zoals een gedeelde herkomst, en deels geconstrueerd was op basis van huwelijksrelaties en vriendschapsbanden. Hoewel hun geografische achtergrond en commerciële banden relatief homogeen waren, gold dit niet voor hun religieuze overtuiging. Zowel katholieke als protestantse kooplieden vestigden zich in Venetië. De Venetiaanse staat gedoogde gereformeerde diensten voor deze belangrijke groep handelaren, zolang er geen Venetianen bij aanwezig waren. De religieuze heterogeniteit vormde echter geen obstakel voor de interne cohesie binnen de koopliedengemeenschap; zowel katholieken als protestanten waren lid van de *nazione fiamminga*, de Nederlandse handelsnatie.

De structuur van deze handelsnatie toont aan dat Venetië op verschillende manieren omging met verschillende groepen buitenlandse kooplieden. In tegenstelling tot de Duitse en Ottomaanse handelaren golden er voor de Nederlanders geen specifieke gemeenschappelijke regels of privileges. Dit had deels te maken met het Venetiaanse verlies van controle over de internationale handel. De overheid kon het zich niet veroorloven de Nederlanders te verplichten in een *fondaco* (gebouw waarin buitenlandse kooplieden resideerden) te wonen en werken om zo hun commerciële activiteiten te kunnen reguleren. Dit gold wel voor de Duitsers die sinds de Middeleeuwen in de *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* verbleven. Daarnaast vormden de Nederlanders geen bedreiging voor de religieuze en politieke rust in de stad. Dit in tegenstelling tot de Ottomaanse handelaren, die vanaf 1620 wel verplicht waren om in een *fondaco* te verblijven om zo het contact tussen de Venetianen en niet-christelijke kooplieden afkomstig uit een potentieel vijandige staat te controleren.

Hoewel er van overheidswege geen specifieke regulering was, zorgde de hechte sociale cohesie tussen de leden van de *nazione fiamminga* voor een informele structuur. Dit maakte dat de natie een belangrijk instrument werd in de relatie tussen de kooplieden en de Venetiaanse

staat. Door middel van collectieve acties zoals het indienen van petities slaagden de Nederlanders erin de sterk protectionistische Venetiaanse regelgeving te verzachten. Hun controle over de aanvoer van cruciale goederen zoals graan, specerijen, en oorlogsmaterieel zorgde voor een sterke onderhandelingspositie. In de archieven van de *Cinque Savi* bevindt zich een grote hoeveelheid petities, waaruit blijkt dat de natie zich inzette om op systematische wijze collectieve privileges te verkrijgen. De verzwakking van de Venetiaanse handel en de dreiging van concurrerende Mediterrane havens maakte dat de Venetiaanse overheid over het algemeen bereid was hun verzoeken in te willigen. De Nederlandse koopliedengemeenschap was minder formeel gereguleerd en minder duidelijk aanwezig in de stad dan de Duitse en Ottomaanse *fondaci*, maar gaf de kooplieden wel de mogelijkheid om de economische wetgeving in Venetië te beïnvloeden en om een betere commerciële uitgangspositie te verwerven.

De natie fungeerde ook als sociaal vangnet voor de individuele koopman die in Venetië niet kon terugvallen op zijn familie en vrienden in de Nederlanden. Zo probeerde de natie de belangen te behartigen van Nederlanders die met de Venetiaanse justitie in aanraking kwamen, maar ondersteunde ze ook landgenoten met praktisch advies of met geld. Toch maakte de interne cohesie en de onderlinge solidariteit niet dat de Nederlanders een gesegregeerde handelsenclave vormden in vroegmodern Venetië, zoals wel is gesuggereerd door Alexander Cowan. Hoewel ze als een commerciële bedreiging werden gezien, waren er geen specifieke restricties op hen van toepassing, ook niet waar het hun vestiging in de stad betrof. Als er al spanningen waren, dan werden deze op papier uitgevochten met de *Cinque Savi* of de Venetiaanse Senaat, waarbij de beslissing vaak in het voordeel van de Nederlanders uitviel. Hun commerciële succes maakte dat zij zich grote woningen in de betere delen van de stad konden veroorloven, waarbij ze vaak nauwe relaties ontwikkelden met hun Venetiaanse buurtgenoten.

Sommige Nederlandse families slaagden er zelfs in om huwelijksbanden te smeden met de Venetiaanse elite. Nederlandse koopmansdochters met rijke bruidsschatten waren interessante huwelijkspartners voor minder welvarende patriciërs, terwijl een dergelijke verbintenis voor de Nederlandse handelaren een belangrijke connectie betekende met de hoogste Venetiaanse kringen. Zoals in het geval van de rijke familie Van Axel vormden huwelijksbanden met het patriciaat een duidelijk en publiek teken van hun stijgende sociale status. Deze sociale klim, die begon vanaf het moment dat Adolf van Axel zich rond 1609 in Venetië vestigde, werd bekroond met het toetreden van de Van Axels tot het Venetiaanse patriciaat in 1665, iets wat de

Nederlandse familie Ghelthof ook deed in 1697. Niet alle Nederlandse kooplieden konden of wensten zoveel tijd, energie, of geld te investeren in toetreding tot de Venetiaanse elite. Toch laat de geslaagde dynastieke politiek van de Van Axels en de Ghelthofs zien hoe de Nederlandse gemeenschap zich een vaste plaats had verworven in de stad. Opnieuw moest Venetië zich neerleggen bij veranderingen die haar identiteit in de kern aantastten. De Nederlandse kooplieden waren er niet alleen in geslaagd een belangrijk deel van haar handel over te nemen, maar drongen nu ook door tot het Venetiaanse patriciaat, dat bijna drie en een halve eeuw lang een gesloten kaste was geweest.

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Annex A: Netherlandish merchants in Venice in eight sample years[1]

	first name	last name	provenance	1590	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650
1	Giovanni	Aelst, van	?							x
2	Adolfo	Axel, van	Malines				x	x		
3	Francesco	Axel, van	Malines					x	x	x
4	Giovanni	Barlamont, de	Antwerp			x				
5	Cornelio	Barle, van	Breda?						x	
6	Giovanni Giacomo	Barle, van	Breda?					x	x	x
7	Federico	Bergher	?			x				
8	Filippo	Boch, de	Hamburg					x	x	
9	Alvise	Bois, du	Antwerp			x	x	x		
10	Abraham	Bois, du	Antwerp							x
11	Samuel	Boudewijns	Antwerp						x	
12	Alberto	Boxtel, van	?							x
13	Daniel	Bruel	?							x
14	Geremia	Calandrini	Lucca					x		
15	Giovanni Battista	Callegari	Antwerp		x					
16	Michiel	Casteele, van der	Southern Netherlands					x		
17	Amblardo	Castre, van	Malines			x				
18	Giacomo	Castre, van	Malines		x	x				
19	Tomaso	Castre, van	Malines			x	x			
20	Balthasar	Charles (son of Balthasar)	Antwerp	x						
21	Gasparo	Charles (son of Balthasar)	Antwerp			x				
22	Balthasar	Charles (son of Gasparo)	Antwerp			x				
23	Matteo	Chestel, van	Antwerp			x				
24	Helman	Cobbe	Antwerp		x					
25	Gregorius	Cocquiel, de	?					x		
26	Geremia	Collen, van	Aachen					x		
27	Giovanni	Collen, van	Aachen			x				
28	Pietro	Collen, van	Aachen				x	x		
29	Abraham	Collen, van	Aachen							x
30	Girolamo	Collen, van	Aachen					x		
31	Enrico	Coninck	?							x
32	Teodoro	Coninck	?							x
33	Ubert	Coninck, de	?						x	
34	Giovanni	Cordes, de	Antwerp		x					
35	Gerardo	Corhase	Antwerp	x						
36	Giovanni	Cornelio	?			x				
37	Sebastian	Cuyper, de	Antwerp			x		x		
38	Pascualis	Decher, de	Antwerp	x						
39	Simon	Decher, de	Antwerp			x	x			
40	Giovanni	Druijvestein	Haarlem						x	x

[1] The information is based on Venetian archival sources, Baetens, *De nazomer*; Brulez, *De firma Della Faille*; Stols, *De Spaanse Brabanders*; Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*; Elias, *De vroedschap*; Van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister*; Wijnroks, *Handel*; Engels, *Merchants, interlopers.*

	first name	last name	provenance	1590	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650
41	Guglielmo	Dupperghesser	?				x			
42	Francesco	Eecren, van	Antwerp	x						
43	Cornelio	Eeden, van	?					x	x	
44	Giusto	Eijch, van	Antwerp							x
45	Girolamo	Enden, van den	?						x	
46	Cornelio	Enden, van den	?							x
47	Gasparo	Engelbrecht	Aachen					x		
48	Carlo	Faille, della	Antwerp			x				
49	Giovanni	Falconieri	Antwerp			x				
50	Gideon	Feillet	?					x	x	
51	Gervasio	Frens	Aachen			x				
52	Carlo	Gabri	Antwerp	x	x	x				
53	Giacomo	Gabri	Antwerp			x				
54	Pietro	Gabri	Antwerp		x	x	x			
55	Andrea	Ghelthof	Antwerp						x	
56	Adriano	Ghisler, de	?				x			
57	Alessandro	Gus, van der?	Antwerp	x						
58	Enrico	Haze, de	Antwerp					x		
59	Giorgio	Haze, de	Antwerp						x	
60	Abraham	Heijermans	Antwerp					x	x	x
61	Giorgio	Heldewier	?	x	x					
62	Nicolò	Heldewier	?	x						
63	Carlo	Helman	Antwerp		x					
64	Guielmo	Helman	Antwerp	x						
65	Federico	Heuvele, van den	?						x	x
66	Giovanni	Heuvele, van den	?							x
67	Cornelio	Hoons	Antwerp	x	x					
68	Filippo	Horne, van	?						x	
69	Francesco	Houtsun, van	?				x			
70	Martin	Hureau	Antwerp		x	x	x	x		
71	Guglielmo	Kerckerinck	Lübeck						x	
72	Pietro	Kint	Antwerp		x					
73	David	Lemaire	Tournai			x				
74	Giacomo	Lemens, van	Antwerp	x	x	x				
75	Giovanni	Lemens, van	Antwerp		x	x				
76	Placido	Lemens, van	Antwerp					x	x	
77	Giovanni	Lemmens	Antwerp			x				
78	Antonio	Lepipere	?		x					
79	Stefano	Londen	Antwerp			x				
80	Emberto	Loosen, van	?				x			
81	Matteo	Loosen, van	Antwerp		x	x	x	x		
82	Pietro	Losson	Antwerp			x				
83	Nicolò	Mahieu	Antwerp	x						
84	Marco	Manart	Antwerp	x						
85	Giovanni	Mere, van	Antwerp				x	x		

	first name	last name	provenance	1590	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650
86	Giacomo	Moens	Antwerp			x				
87	Giovanni	Moens	Antwerp			x				
88	Henrico	Moens	Antwerp			x				
89	Marco	Moens	Antwerp				x	x	x	x
90	Michael	Moens	Antwerp					x		
91	Giusfredo	Nays	Antwerp		x	x				
92	Antonio	Neste, van	Antwerp	x	x					
93	Giacomo	Neste, van	Antwerp						x	
94	Martino	Neste, van	Antwerp						x	
95	Stefano	Neste, van	Antwerp		x	x	x	x	x	
96	Giovanni	Neufville	Frankfurt					x		
97	Daniel	Nichetti	Antwerp		x					
98	Giacomo	Nichetti	Antwerp		x					
99	Giovanni Battista	Nicolai	?						x	x
100	Daniel	Nijs	Antwerp		x	x	x	x		
101	Giacomo	Nijs	Antwerp				x			
102	Giacomo	Noirot	Antwerp					x		
103	Giovanni	Noirot	Antwerp					x		
104	Balthasar	Noirot	Antwerp	x						
105	Melchior	Noirot	Antwerp			x				
106	Rodolfo	Oloffs	?						x	
107	Egidio	Ouwercx	?				x			
108	Giovanni	Parmentier	Antwerp		x					
109	Pietro	Pellicorno	Antwerp		x					
110	Giusto	Pels	?							x
111	Nicolò	Perez	Antwerp		x	x	x			
112	Cornelio	Peters	?							x
113	Martino	Piers	?							x
114	Giacomo	Pieteri, de	?	x						
115	Tommaso	Piscilla	?							x
116	David	Pit, van der	Antwerp			x				
117	Cornelio	Piters	?				x			
118	Giovanni	Piters	?				x			
119	Pietro	Prato, del	Aachen		x	x				
120	Gillio	Put, van der	Antwerp			x				
121	Pietro	Put, van der	Antwerp		x	x	x			
122	Melchior	Quingetti	Antwerp		x	x	x			
123	Paolo	Ramacher	?						x	
124	Rinaldo	Ramparto	?	x						
125	Nicolò	Raspagne, de	Antwerp			x				
126	Giovanni	Reijnst	Amsterdam					x	x	x
127	Angelo	Requienzi	?			x				
128	Antonio	Retano	Antwerp				x	x	x	
129	Giacomo	Retano	Antwerp							x
130	Cornelio	Robiano, de	Antwerp	x	x					

	first name	last name	provenance	1590	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650
131	Francesco	Rocha	Antwerp			x				
132	Giovanni Antonio	Rusca	Antwerp			x				
133	Giovanni Battista	Schoemacher	?			x	x	x		
134	Carlo	Snellich	Antwerp	x	x					
135	Balthasar	Snoeck	?					x		
136	Giovanni	Stayert	?			x				
137	Daniel	Steenwinckel	Amsterdam				x			
138	Giacomo	Stricher	Amsterdam						x	x
139	Simon	Tas	Antwerp		x					
140	Giacomo	Thilen, van	?			x				
141	Giovanni Battista	Tilmans	Antwerp			x				
142	Guglielmo	Tilmans	Antwerp			x	x			
143	Abraham	Tongherlo	Antwerp			x				
144	Giovanni Battista	Tongherlo	Antwerp			x				
145	Domenico	Uffelen, van	Antwerp			x				
146	Giovanni	Uffelen, van	Antwerp			x				
147	Luca	Uffelen, van	Antwerp				x	x		
148	Giovanni Battista	Valle, de	Gent		x					
149	Pietro	Vasseur	?		x					
150	Giacomo	Veerle, van	Antwerp						x	
151	Giovanni	Veerle, van	Antwerp						x	x
152	Giovanni	Vinck	?						x	x
153	Pietro	Vooght, de	Antwerp			x	x			
154	Gualterio	Voort, van der	Lille				x	x	x	x
155	Isaac	Voort, van der	Lille							x
156	Francesco	Vrins	Antwerp	x	x					
157	Egidio	Wachmans	Antwerp					x	x	
158	Giovanni	Wale, de	Antwerp	x						
159	Giovanni	Walle, de	Antwerp				x	x	x	x
160	Gasparo	Wesel	?				x			
161	Girolamo	Willem, de	Tournai						x	x